More face plunder rap for ₱5.3-B tax fraud

STORY ON PAGE A2

₱.5-M shopping splurge

BILI LANG KAYO! BASTA ₱500,000 LANG ANG LIMIT KO!
SARAP MAMILI!

BY C. C. YAMSUAN

A 23-YEAR-OLD accounting clerk yesterday spent half a million pesos shopping at one of the country's largest department stores—and her family and store employees cheered her on.

P.5-M/ A19

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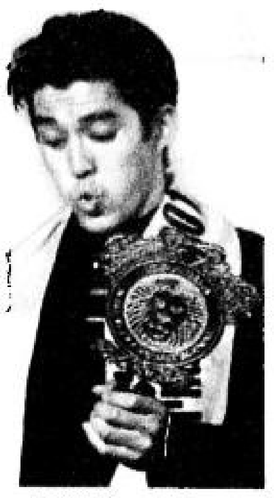
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2001 ★ 92 PAGES 8 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 9 ₱15

Pinoy hunk voted best int'l model

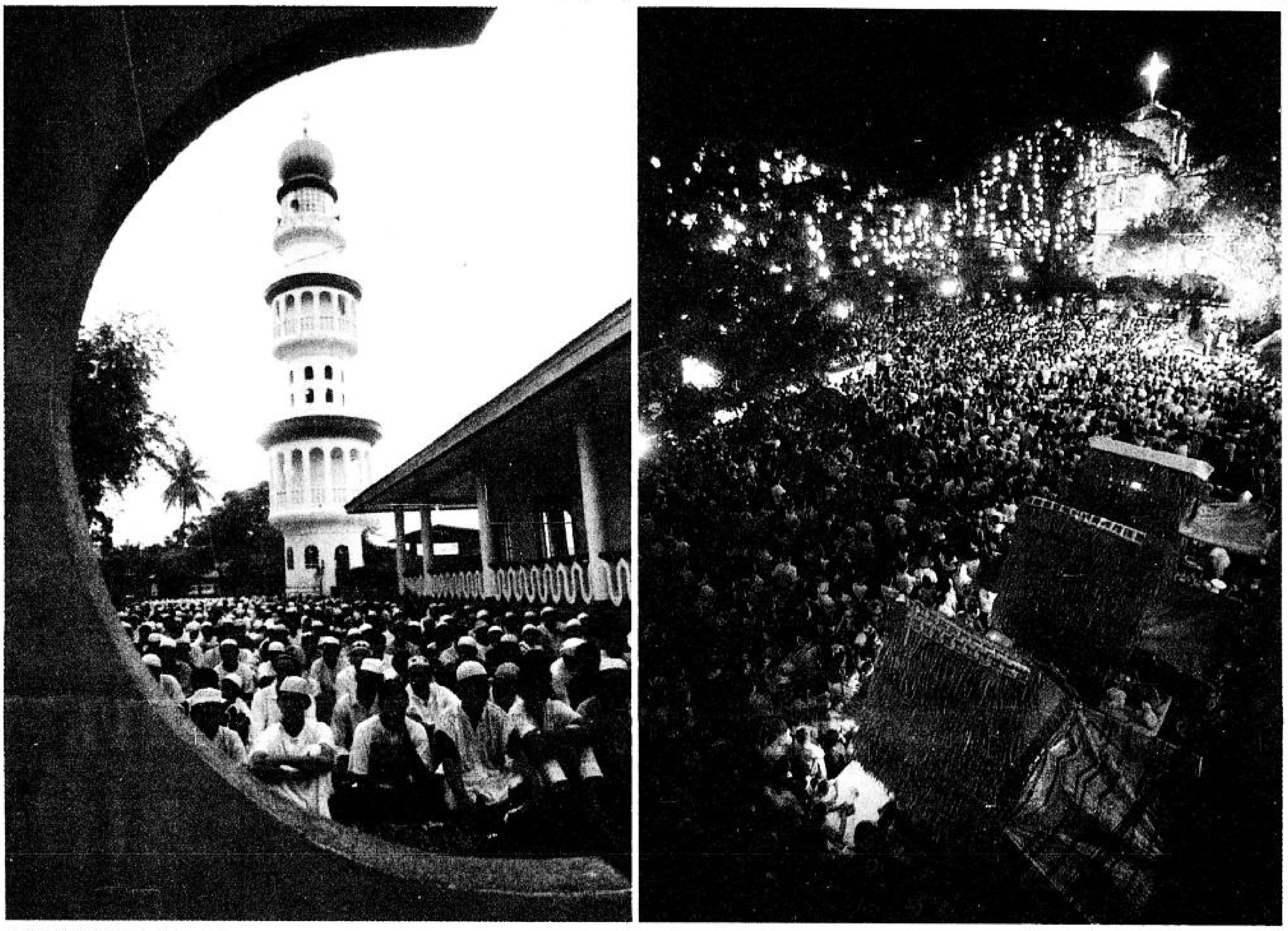
A FILIPINO *balikbayan*, whom the INQUIRER featured in its Oct. 26 issue, has won India's international pageant for male models.

PINOY/ A20



AQUINO

PCGG to take over UCPB



A DAY OF TWO FAITHS

DENNIS SABANGAN/ERIK ARAZAS

Muslims (left photo) mark the end of the fasting month of Ramadan with the celebration of Eid'l Fitr inside a mosque in Talusangay, Zamboanga City, on Sunday. Earlier at dawn, Catholics (right photo) flock to the St. Joseph Church in Las Piñas City on the first day of the "Misa de Gallo."

Danding appointees face ouster

BY DONNA S. CUETO AND CARLITO PABLO

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo may be reluctant to oust Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. as chair of San Miguel Corp., but his people face expulsion from the 15-member board controlling the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB).

Also facing ouster are five SMC directors appointed by deposed President Joseph Estrada for failing to notify the government of Japanese brewery Kirin Co. Ltd.'s plan to take a 15-percent stake.

An official of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) yesterday said all the UCPB directors, including the appointees of Estrada and representatives of Cojuangco, would have to give way to the PCGG's new nominees.

"*Walang maiiwan* (No one among the current board members will remain)," PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza said. "We will have to come in and reacquire the board of directors at the UCPB."

Carranza said this was the implication of the Supreme Court's rul-

PCGG/ A20

SMC sale to Kirin blocked

BY DONNA S. CUETO

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government (PCGG) is "studying all options" to prevent the sale of 15 percent of San Miguel Corp. to Kirin Co. Ltd., saying the five-year lock-up period would primarily benefit SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr.

"It is not yet too late," PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza said.

Carranza said the lock-up period involved a voting trust agreement in which Kirin would vote with the Cojuangco bloc.

"This is grossly unfair to the other stockholders, especially to the coconut farmers who were not even represented in the board," he said.

Aside from the "fundamentally wrong" provision on the "voting trust agreement" in the five-year

SMC/ A20

Arming of priests rejected

BY FERDINAND O. ZUASOLA
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MATI, Davao Oriental—The Vatican's ambassador to the Philippines has frowned upon suggestions that priests assigned in areas of conflict in Mindanao should be armed.

"Arming our priests is a crazy idea," the Most Rev. Antonio Franco, the papal nuncio, told the INQUIRER on Friday.

Franco, who attended the celebration of the 17th founding anniversary of the Diocese of Mati, said arming the clergy would only aggravate the problem.

The proposal arose after clergy members noted that kidnap groups were not sparing them anymore.

Many of them have declared their intentions to acquire firearms after the Catholic bishops in Mindanao called on all priests, especially those assigned in areas of conflict, to resist any abduction attempts—at all costs.

Some priests have interpreted the call as tantamount to ordering them to arm and defend themselves from kidnappers.

During the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference held in Malaybalay City in October, some priests started to entertain the idea of buying firearms for themselves.

"It is understandable why the papal nuncio has lambasted the idea of arming the priests because it is not sanctioned by the Church," said Fr. Danilo Fuentes of the Social Action Center of the Diocese of Mati.

"Priests who have armed them-

ARMING/ A20

LAST STAND IN TORA BORA

Bin Laden: How will his end come?

WASHINGTON—Theories about how the end might come for Osama bin Laden will soon get their test if fighters in the Afghan mountains are right in their belief he is still there to be found.

Various methods and motivations are in play, any one of which might result in his death. There is, most obviously, the increasingly focused torrent of US bombs, combined with slowly progressing ground forces.

His end might come in ways not imagined, thanks to the $25-million reward being dangled.

According to some people familiar with the ways of terrorists, Bin Laden might die by his own hand, or by request to a trusted lieutenant, if faced with death from those he considers infidels.

Lexington Institute military analyst Dan Goure believes Bin Laden's interest in martyrdom would recommend a fight to the death on his part. If he is the final al-Qaida member to die, so much the better for the legend.

"The best he can hope is that this is going to be like Custer's Last Stand," he said.

Islamic law forbids suicide. But more radical groups interpret the Koran to sanction suicide missions against enemies to gain martyrdom. Fanatics may even commit mass suicide in the cause of holy war or to avoid capture, torture or death by the enemy's hand, scholars say.

Arab press reports have suggested Bin Laden has sought and received an edict from clergy close to him, permitting him to take his life if he faces capture or death from opposition forces.

Goure disagrees with the common view that Bin Laden's capture would be less preferable for America because of the headache of putting him on trial and because it might be less satisfying to the US psyche than killing him.

"The best we can hope, I suspect, is that he is found alone, begging for his life, and we take him out in chains."

A US official said American forces had heard Bin Laden giving orders over short-range radio in the Tora Bora area of eastern Afghanistan during all-out assaults this past week on the rugged mountains and

BIN/ A21

Erap's doctor eyes knee surgery next

BY VOLT CONTRERAS

DEPOSED President Joseph Estrada received the gift of clearer vision yesterday, the traditional start of the country's long Christmas season.

Under tight security, the 64-year-old former President underwent a 19-minute cataract surgery operation at the Asian Eye Institute in the upscale Rockwell commercial and business center in Makati City.

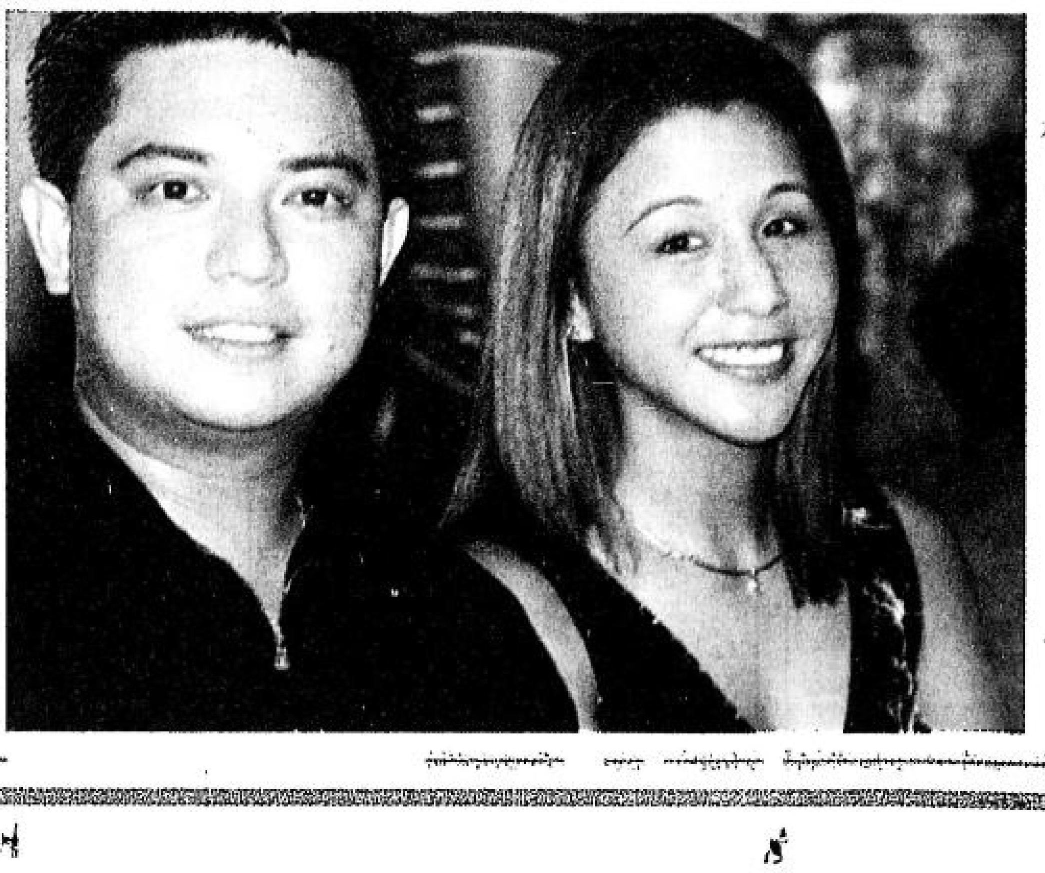
He emerged smiling and waving to a crowd after the morning operation.

"It was 100-percent very successful," he told reporters, pointing to his slightly swollen left eye protected by eyeglasses.

Estrada arrived at the AEI at 6:38 a.m.—well ahead of his 7 a.m. appointment—in a police convoy that whisked him from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City. He is detained in a VMMC suite with son Jinggoy, a coaccused in the first-ever corruption case involving a former president.

Accompanied by wife Sen. Luisa Ejercito, Estrada came

ERAP/ A19



MY GIRL

Angela Montenegro, 27, the tall, beauteous future daughter-in-law of President Macapagal-Arroyo, shows up with boyfriend Mikey Arroyo, on the first day of the Misa de Gallo in Malacañang on Sunday. The couple has announced plans to tie the knot sometime early next year. "She's the woman who has made me so happy," Mikey says of Angela.

VAL HANDUMON

Second FRONT PAGE

P5.3-B FRAUD

More face plunder charge for tax fraud

By Michael Lim Ubac

MORE people are expected to be charged for the tax credit certificates scam as the special presidential task force probing the caper said a second plunder charge would be filed soon at the Ombudsman's office against others allegedly involved in the P5.3-billion scam.

Finance Undersecretary Cornelio Gison, who chairs the multi-agency Special Presidential Task Force 156, did not name the second group of respondents but said the new case would include some "powerful people" and former finance department officials who colluded with them.

Gison said President Macapagal-Arroyo has given specific instructions to prosecute everyone involved, stressing that she did not want any out-of-court settlements as "it would only send the wrong signal that crime pays."

"Things have changed," said Gison, saying the President does not want any dilly-dallying.

"There won't be any whitewash. There won't be any withering of the political will to prosecute those parties involved in this scam," said Gison.

Plunder is a non-bailable offense punishable by death.

During the short-lived Estrada presidency, the task force built up cases against those allegedly involved in the scam but the cases were not filed after Chinese-Filipino businessman Jaime Dichaves, a known Estrada crony, allegedly intervened.

Last Thursday, the task force filed the first plunder complaint against two former top officials of Pilipinas Shell and Petron, a former finance undersecretary and eight others for their alleged complicity in the scam.

They were all charged for the alleged illegal issuance of tax credit certificates (TCCs) worth a total of P131.2 million from 1994 to 1997.

Among those charged were Shell treasury and taxation general manager Pacifico Cruz, Petron general manager Celso Legarda, former finance undersecretary Antonio Belicena and former finance officials Uldarico Andutan Jr. and Rowena Malonzo.

Also charged were six officials of the Chingkoe group of companies—Faustino and Gloria Chingkoe, Winston Chingkoe, Catalina Bautista, Amante Ares and Reynato Andaya.

Belicena and Andutan, among others, were earlier indicted by the Sandiganbayan for graft for allegedly illegally issuing TCCs to other unqualified firms, which were either non-existent or had already closed down.

The plunder complaint was filed based on Executive Order No. 38, issued by Ms Macapagal early this year.

EO 38 reorganized Task Force 156 originally created in 1999 by jailed ex-president Estrada.

EO 38 ordered Task Force 156 to investigate, gather evidence and prosecute individuals, corporations and other entities suspected of being involved in the illegal issuance and use of tax credit certificates at the one-stop shop inter-agency tax credit and duty drawback center (OSS).

The tax credit certificate system was an incentive scheme for domestic companies importing raw materials from abroad.

The companies were granted tax credits which were offset against taxes, duties and fees they were supposed to pay the government.

. The TCCs, usually issued by the finance secretary, were also transferable, but only under certain conditions.

In the first plunder complaint, the task force alleged that the OSS, an agency attached to the finance department which issued the certificates, had unlawfully granted TCCs to the Chingkoe group's Diamond Knitting Corp. for three years after the company closed down in 1993.

The company then allegedly illegally transferred the TCCs to Pilipinas Shell and Petron Corp. which then used them to pay their P131.2 million excise tax obligations with the internal revenue bureau.

In the complaint-affidavit filed on Dec. 13, Task Force 156 claimed that the Chingkoe group, particularly Diamond Knitting, obtained 40 TCCs worth P131.2 million from the OSS.

The TCCs were, however, applied for even after the Chingkoe-owned company had closed down.

It said that Belicena, Andutan and Malonzo had approved, issued and released the TCCs to Diamond Knitting without evaluating the authenticity of the documents submitted.

It later turned out that the documents had been forged.

Diamond Knitting allegedly used the TCCs to buy petroleum products from Shell and Petron.

But the firm had been closed for more than a year when it was supposed to have been buying petroleum products from the two oil firms, the task force said.

"It was impossible for these oil companies to have made deliveries to Diamond Knitting for the simple reason that (Diamond Knitting) did not have any operations and therefore had no use for petroleum products," the complaint stated.

The task force said the "trade relationship" between the Chingkoe firm and the two oil companies was "non-existent."

The alleged transfer of TCCs from Diamond Knitting to the oil companies were based on deeds of assignment which "were executed to make it appear that Shell and Petron were raw material and/or component suppliers of Diamond Knitting," the task force said.

Diamond Knitting supposedly took delivery of 26,388,520 liters of oil over a period of 40 months. This translated to an average delivery of 659,713 liters per month.

The task force said it was impossible for Diamond Knitting to have received monthly deliveries of this quantity "for the simple reason that it did not have the facility to store or capacity to consume this volume of oil during the same period."

The complaint alleged that Malonzo prepared the documents for approval of Diamond Knitting's request for the TCCs to be transferred to Shell and Petron.

She allegedly recommended approval without considering the "inordinately large volume of oil involved in the transaction" and without considering Diamond Knitting's alleged history of unliquidated advances.

Andutan allegedly recommended approval of Diamond Knitting's request for the TCCs' transfer while Belicena approved the transfer.

Bautista and Ares allegedly received the TCCs in behalf of Diamond Knitting.

Cruz and Andaya allegedly facilitated the transfer of the TCCs in favor of Petron and Pilipinas Shell.

ASIAN MIGRANT COORDINATING BODY
WHO DESERVES A WAGE CUT?

HK MAIDS MARCH

MIGRANTE PHOTO

Domestics marched in Hong Kong on Dec. 2 to protest the cuts in maids' wages announced by the HK government. The protest was led by the Asian Migrant Coordinating Body which plans to go caroling in front of the Hong Kong central government offices on Dec. 21. A big outdoor rally for migrant workers in Hong Kong is also scheduled on Dec. 30.

Still no Burnhams; Abus elude military anew

KAPATAGAN GRANDE, Isabela City—The Burnhams will not be going home just yet. And neither will Filipino Ediborah Yap, the nurse who was abducted during the siege of Lamitan town last June.

After its much-publicized announcement that American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham would be enjoying a "white Christmas," the military has admitted it failed to carry out its objective of freeing the hostages before the mass at midnight yesterday.

Earlier, Southcom chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu said the military was very optimistic the hostages would be rescued before Dec. 16 "because we are closing in on the Abu Sayyaf."

"They will celebrate white Christmas together with their respective families," Cimatu said then.

After the self-imposed deadline lapsed yesterday, Cimatu said the military had lost track of the bandit group.

He blamed the geography of Barangay Abong Abong in Maluso town as the reason why the Abu Sayyaf bandits have slipped out of the military's "sight."

Brig. Gen. Glicerio Sua, the chief of the Task Force Comet charged with rescuing the hostages, said the military would be giving itself another week.

"We did not actually issue a deadline here, it was a mere timeframe (for) our plans," Sua clarified.

Despite the setback, Cimatu said the military remained optimistic.

About 3,000 soldiers have been combing the jungles of Basilan to find the Abu Sayyaf group, led by Abu Sabaya, which is holding the Burnhams and the one led by Hamsiraji Sali, which is holding Yap.

"Everybody is longing to go home," Sua said.

Meanwhile, a military officer said yesterday Abu Sabaya, a.k.a. Aldam Tilao, was limping from wounds sustained in a recent encounter with the military.

Capt. George Frugoso, operations officer of the 2nd Marine Battalion said Sabaya, the self-styled spokesperson of the bandit group, had been seriously wounded during an encounter in Barangay Erelei, Sumisip, Basilan on Dec. 7.

"He is now very weak and can't walk far," said Frugoso, citing as his source an Abu Sayyaf bandit who was captured during the encounter.

But even in his weakened condition, Sabaya was still in command of his group, Frugoso said.

Based on the information given by the arrested bandit, Sabaya is still the one who deals with various private individuals trying to secure the release of the Burnhams, Frugoso said.

Recent press reports said that among those privately attempting to negotiate with the Abu Sayyaf was Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Cimatu said Sabaya has even reduced his ransom demand from $2 million to P40 million.

Col. Hermogenes Esperon, commander of the 103rd Brigade said the lowered ransom was to have been the subject of negotiations between Sabaya and some private individuals working for the release of the American hostages.

The negotiations, which should have taken place in Sumisip town, were reportedly called off because of heavy military deployment.

Aside from his wound, Frugoso said Sabaya was also facing the problem of lack of food.

He said the military operations in Basilan have deterred the group of Amir Mingkong from sending food to the bandits.

Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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‘If Manila does not accept Misuari we would send him to another place’

MAHATHIR

MISUARI

MALAYSIA may release jailed rebel leader Nur Misuari or send him to a third country if the Philippines does not take him back, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Sunday.

“If they don’t take Misuari back we have no right to detain him because he has not committed any offense in our country,” Mahathir told reporters who asked about Misuari’s possible repatriation to the Philippines.

“We also find that Misuari has no valid travel papers, so he has no right to stay in Malaysia,” Mahathir said. “If Manila does not accept him we would be forced to send him to another place. That is normal.”

Misuari, the former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, was charged with rebellion last month after his supporters attacked army installations on the island of Jolo.

More than 100 people died in the fighting.

Misuari was arrested on Nov. 24 in Malaysian waters as he tried to flee a military reprisal. The assault by Misuari forces was considered a bid to disrupt elections to pick his successor as ARMM governor.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had said she was content to leave Misuari indefinitely in Malaysian custody.

Malaysian authorities, who are holding Misuari at a secret location because of fears his supporters may try to free him, have repeatedly said they want to deport Misuari.

Mahathir said previously that Malaysia would not hold Misuari for longer than one month from the time of his arrest.

Misuari has reportedly sought the help of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to arrange for asylum in a third country.

He has also reportedly filed for asylum with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees through his lawyer in Washington DC.

Mahathir said he was not aware of any country that has indicated an interest in granting asylum to Misuari.

“I do not know if there is a third country that wants to accept him,” Mahathir said.

The prime minister said he has not met with Norberto Gonzales, the special envoy sent by President Macapagal to Malaysia Thursday to arrange the handover of Misuari to Manila.

It is believed Misuari would be repatriated around Christmas.

Misuari faces rebellion charges, punishable by 20 years in prison, for allegedly instigating the pocket rebellion that claimed more than 100 lives and spawned a hostage-taking situation in Zamboanga City that was resolved peacefully. *AP, AFP*

MILF urges OIC: Take custody of Misuari

By E. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—The chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front has asked the Organization of the Islamic Conference to take renegade Muslim leader Nur Misuari into its custody.

In a letter dated Dec. 2 to OIC Secretary General Abdelouabed Belkeziz, MILF chair Salamat Hashim said Misuari should be handed over to the 57-nation Pan-Islamic body, “so he could explain his side.”

Salamat heads the MILF, which splintered off from Misuari’s older and more dominant Moro National Liberation Front in 1978.

The MNLF signed a peace accord with the government in 1996, after which Misuari was elected governor of the five-province Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

On Nov. 19, one week before elections to choose his successor, Misuari led more than a thousand followers in raids on military installations in Sulu in which scores were killed.

Misuari escaped to Sabah where he was arrested by Malaysian authorities.

Although he did not categorically state it in his letter, which was made available to the media only yesterday, Hashim was apparently apprehensive of Misuari’s fate once he is handed over to the Philippine government.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has given the Macapagal administration up to Dec. 25 to take Misuari back, or he would be released.

Misuari is being held in a jail on Jampiras Island near Sandakan, Sabah for entering Malaysian territory without travel documents.

He was also investigated for alleged involvement in the infamous Sipadan hostage crisis of 2000, but was cleared by Malaysian police.

Under Malaysian law, Misuari could only be held for about two weeks without charges.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has said Misuari would be brought back to the country to face rebellion and other charges.

She had hinted, however, that she wouldn’t mind if Malaysian authorities held him longer until things quieted down in southern Mindanao.

Ms Macapagal also denounced the former ARMM governor for violating the 1996 peace agreement that he signed with the government.

The President said the government was doing all it could to fulfill the agreement, but it was Misuari who caused its derailment.

Hashim said it is the OIC that should determine if Misuari had violated the peace accord.

“Misuari should be given a chance to explain his side,” Hashim wrote Belkeziz in Arabic.

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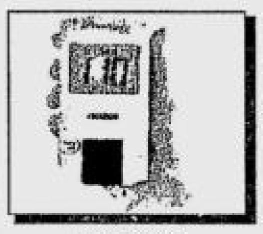

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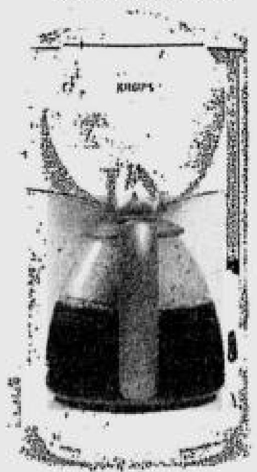

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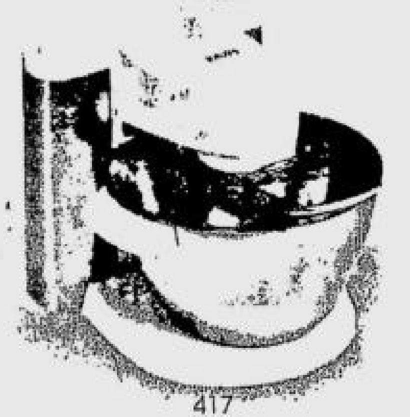

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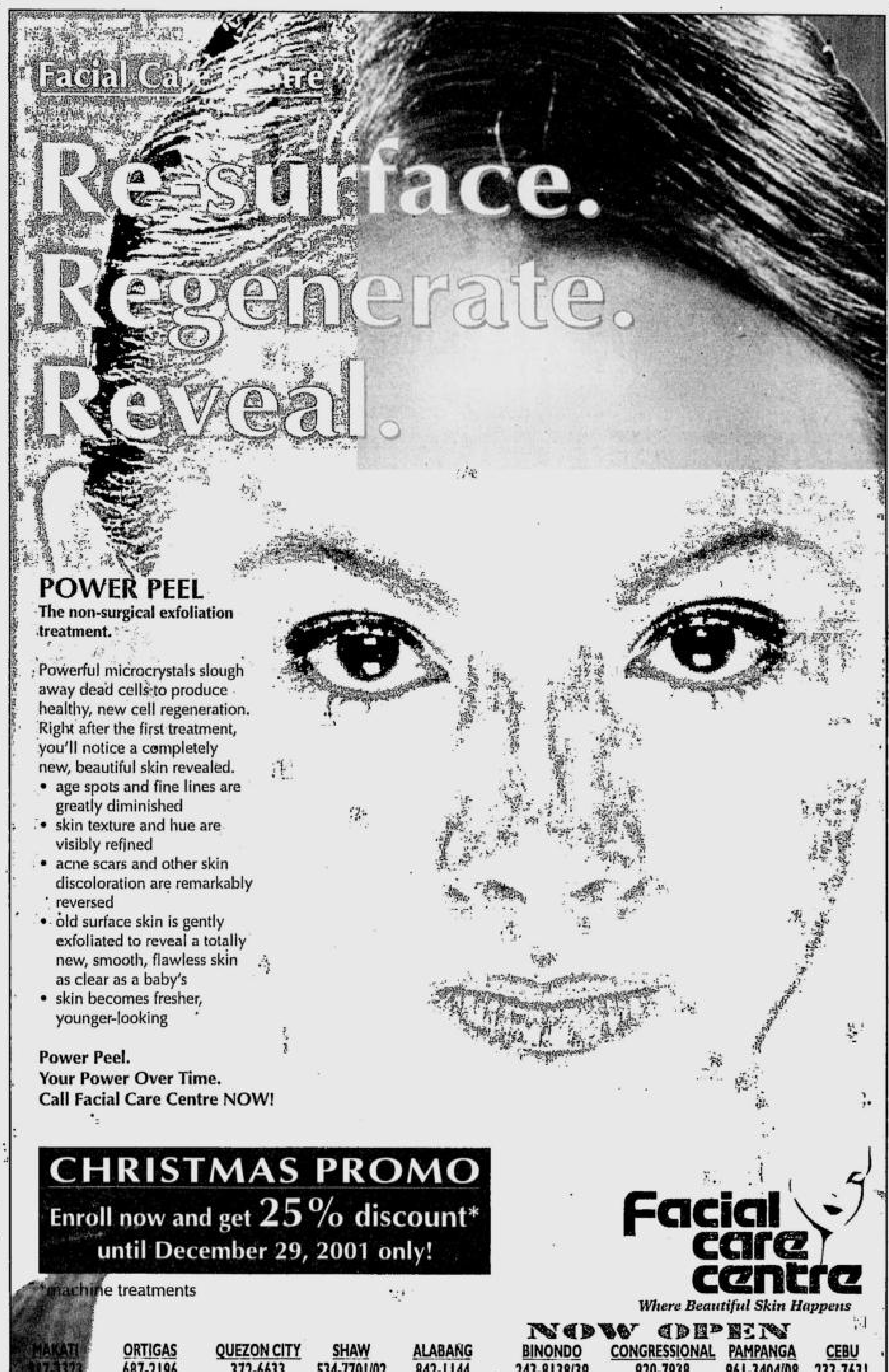

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Baguio kids have a white Santa

'Amerikano' has played Santa for 17 years

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A "genuine" white-bearded Santa Claus will bring Yuletide cheer to this mountain resort city come hell or high water.

After a two-year absence as a graying, candy-throwing Santa Claus, Californian William Galvin, 58, flew into Baguio on Wednesday and dusted off his red suit.

The next day he made a quick public appearance around the city market in search of street children.

"We're scared of him," a boy said while evading Galvin's bear hug.

But longtime residents who saw Galvin at a fast-food counter Thursday were swamped with memories of the man. "Yes, he's that Santa who gave out hard candies," said Jorge, 34, now a teacher in a local college. "Kids followed him everywhere on Session Road. I think I used to tug my dad so he'd stop walking, because I needed to see that Santa. But I never got to meet him."

Galvin said sustaining the Christmas spirit had been his passion since 1974, when a reporter asked him to play Santa Claus at an annual Baguio holiday program.

"I didn't even have a beard then," he said. "I had on this fake beard, (which was) white all over. But I decided to grow my own. (It) took me seven years to get a good (beard). I've had this ever since."

Fixture

Galvin's gray-eyed Santa became a holiday fixture.

He frequented the old Pines Hotel and the Hyatt Terraces Baguio before the 1990 earthquake, and was a favorite party guest for many community affairs.

"I was invited by the Vergara family 14 years ago, and I played Santa, and I got the best gifts ever—a ham and a bottle of brandy. I don't do this for money. I just tell them to feed me," Galvin recalled.

"Now, I'm finally back and this Vergara fellow's the mayor," he added, referring to Bernardo Vergara, now city mayor after three terms as Baguio congressman.

Galvin said he had not been around for many Christmases in the last 10 years and had only managed to squeeze in a couple of days in 1999 to do the St. Nick gig.

"Just plain Bill" to his friends, Galvin is an itinerant antique dealer who spends each year shuttling from Baguio to Mt. Province, from Thailand to the interior parts of Asia and back to California, carrying the best Ibaloi or Bontoc weaves and baskets and Thai figurines.

Then he hits the road in America's southwest to sell these treasures.

Galvin said it was a job he willingly embraced after an engineering stint on an American oil tanker that refueled US military ships and planes off the military bases in the Philippines and Japan.

"I spend most of my time here," he said. "Baguio is my center. But I travel to Thailand or the Mt. Province and I spend two months of a year in the United States."

Depression

Galvin has been a transient Baguio resident for almost 26 years although his Samar-born wife and two sons live here.

He said he saw new relevance in playing Santa when he began connecting the mass depression that stemmed from the Sept. 11 attacks in America with the flight of tourists from tourist-friendly Thailand.

He flew to the Philippines from a long trip around Thailand.

"(The terrorist attack on US soil) hit everyone pretty badly," he said. "I saw it back home and I saw it hitting Thailand. I was there a few weeks ago and tourists were not around. Thailand must have lost about 40 percent. Back here, except for the Americans who live here, I did not see any tourists."

Galvin said he had aborted a trip to "Ground Zero"—what was once the World Trade Center in New York.

"I was in Sta. Fe, New Mexico, (when the crisis struck the US)," he recalled. "I wanted to go to New York. I had someone sending over stuff for New York, but then I (told myself), 'There'd be a lot of policemen around.' And gas shot up to $4 a gallon, so I said, 'Stuff it.'"

Priority

Getting home to Baguio suddenly became Galvin's new priority.

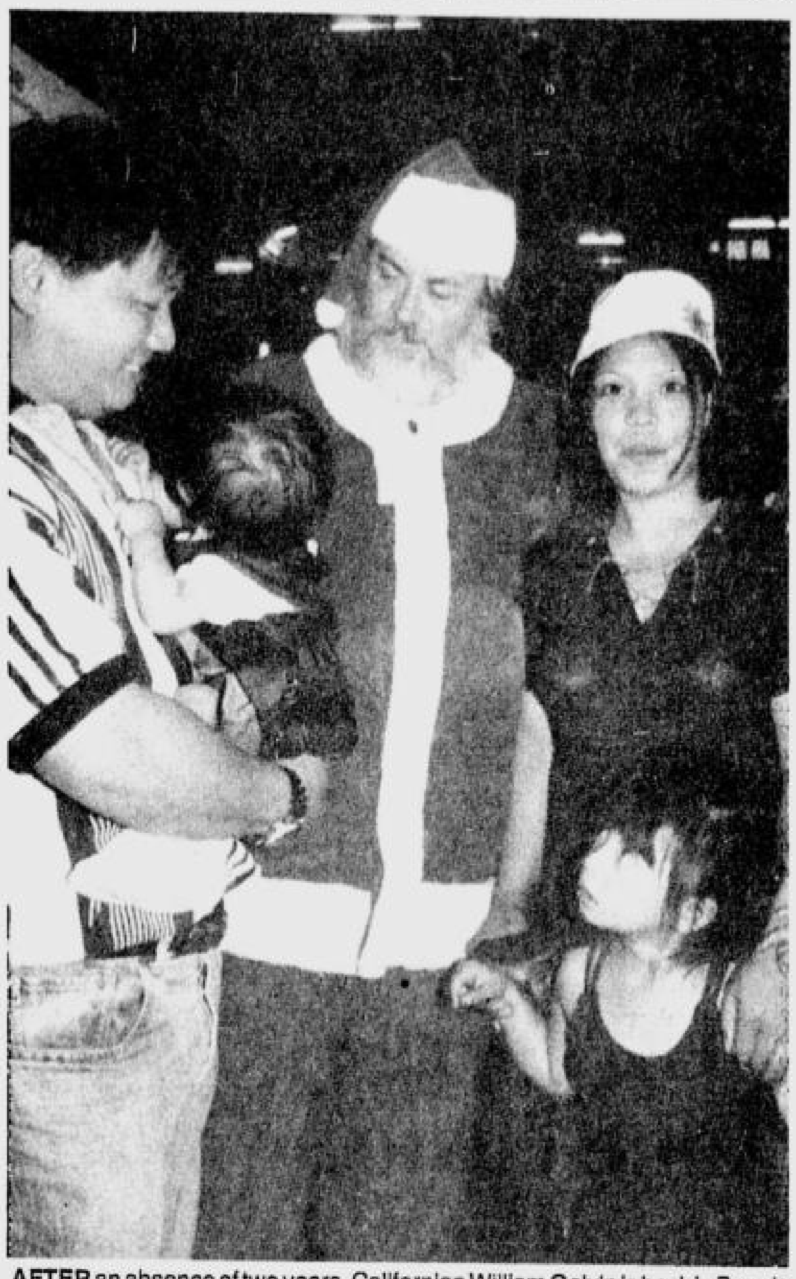
"I've been Santa for 17 years (in the city) and I'm not about to leave (this role behind)," he said. "But money is so hard. And even if I owned a restaurant here I'd get somebody else to manage it (because) you can't strap me to just one place. I'd go crazy."

He laughed heartily as he patted his beard.

"I've never even worn the suit in (Bontoc) because it's too far (from Baguio)," he said. "Christmas is too short and I couldn't do this there and come back here. It's just not possible."

But friends said Galvin had come back to a city that still regarded him as a minor folk icon.

"He's *Amerikano*," said his fellow American Raymond Bates, a distributor of publications. "But he's your Santa."



AFTER an absence of two years, Californian William Galvin is back in Baguio City where he is an enduring icon for Christmas. EV ESPIRITU

Christmas capital all set for giant lantern festival

By T.Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Imagine eight Christmas lanterns—each as huge as 15 feet in diameter and illuminated by no less than 2,000 bulbs—blinking, flashing, throbbing to the rhythm of Yuletide jingles or to the latest party hits.

One can't find this exciting scene anywhere else but in the City of San Fernando, which has earned the title "Christmas Capital of the Philippines."

The big night, dubbed as "Ligligan Parol 2001," is set on Dec. 22 at the SM City Pampanga, according to Mayor Reynaldo Aquino.

The event, which draws thousands of foreign and local tourists, is actually a competition that dates back to pre-World War II years.

Aquino said the festival promises to surpass the extravagance of last year, this year being the first Christmas celebration of San Fernando as a city.

He said the city government is subsidizing the production of the giant lanterns. Each *parol* costs P150,000.

He said this is not to only make the festival a success but also to provide a promotional push to the lantern cottage industry.

The showcase of the best homemade lanterns after the usual Christmas Eve procession held since the town was carved from Bacolor and Mexico towns in 1755 had spun off the lantern-making business in the city.

"Lantern making has become a viable cottage industry in this city and other parts of Pampanga, particularly those devastated by lahar," Aquino said.

Lanterns of all shapes, sizes and colors are manufactured now in Lubao and Minalin towns.

In this city alone, there are almost 2,000 lantern makers, some of whom export the decors abroad.

The city government has exempted lantern-makers from paying business taxes.

Aquino said this helps boost the homegrown industry.

In the city, the lantern makers of Barangays San Jose, Del Pilar, Sta. Lucia, Sto. Rosario, Dolores, Sto. Niño, San Felipe and San Nicolas have united to vie for the biggest, brightest and most beautiful *parol*.

A week before the festival, the craftsmen have already mounted the giant lanterns on trucks and framed these on wood from where they work the whole day through.

The lanterns are molded, fitted with bulbs and sheeted with colorful plastics. Their twinkle will be later synchronized to music.

Giant lanterns that won in past festivals had been featured in exhibits in the United States and Europe to create market for Pampanga lanterns abroad, according to Board Member Robert David.

A photo contest on the giant lantern festival will be also launched on Dec. 22. The winning photos, either by amateurs or professionals, will be displayed on Feb. 4 next year on the first cityhood anniversary of San Fernando.

The Paskuhan Village, which is also in San Fernando and is the third of such theme park in the world after those in the United States and Germany, is also spruced up for the occasion, David said.

Cordillera farmers face toxic threats

By B. Rivera

AROUND 80 percent of farmers in the Cordillera Autonomous Region are in danger of being poisoned and getting cancer and respiratory ailments because of their farming practices,

A study by the Occupational Hazards and Safety Center (OHSC) revealed that organophosphate, a chemical farmers use as pesticide, has harmful effects on those exposed to it.

Of the 75 farmers from Benguet and Mt. Province tested by the OHSC, 55 showed symptoms of respiratory tract irritation, muscle cramps and weakness.

The OHSC said most of those who tested positive for ailments caused by exposure to organophospate were unmarried males aged between 35 to 55.

Dulce Gust, OHSC executive director, urged the government to actively and immediately launch an intensive information campaign on harmful pesticides among the 100,000 farmers in CAR.

The OHSC study also showed that ailments related to organophosphate could cause cancer and genetic abnormality among married couples.

The OHSC, which is under the Department of Labor and Employment, conducted the study through a structured pre-testing questionnaire and later, a blood tests on the farmers.

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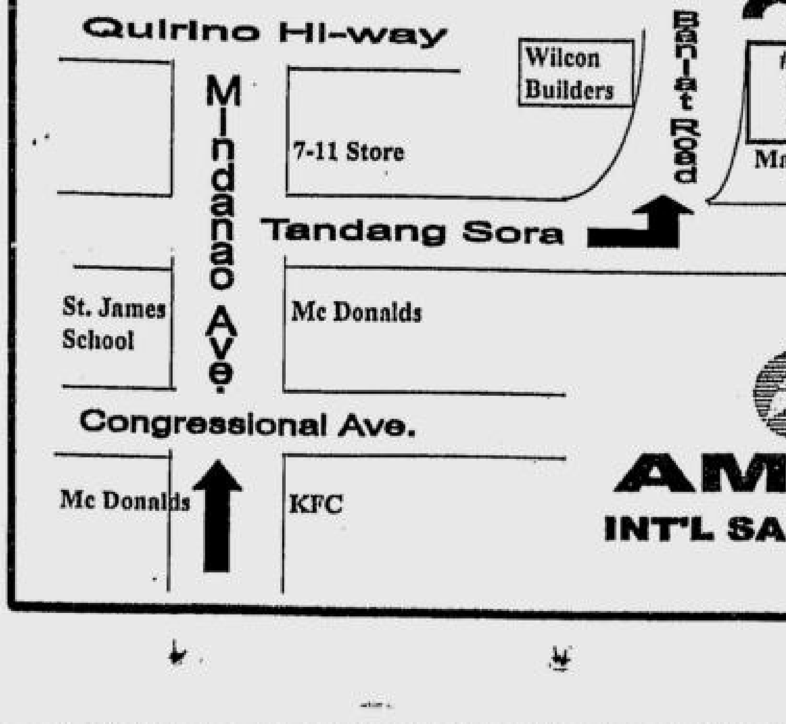

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UN: 250M kids trapped in smuggling, sex rings

TOKYO—Governments and private organizations are making progress in spreading awareness about the multibillion-dollar global sex trade in children but more needs to be done to contain and ultimately stamp out the industry, a top Unicef official said Sunday.

Carol Bellamy, Unicef Executive Director, said this week's Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children will focus on how an array of governments and private organizations can work together to free the estimated 250 million children trapped in smuggling and prostitution rings and punish the perpetrators.

"We've seen a difference in Southeast Asia and west Africa. Governments are taking these issues more seriously because there's been more public attention," Bellamy told The Associated Press.

"But public attention alone isn't going to do it."

Tackling the problem has taken on a greater urgency because the global economic downturn has only allowed the illicit trade to flourish, she said.

The goal of the four-day conference—which begins Monday in Yokohama—will be for delegates to evaluate progress from the inaugural meeting five years ago in Stockholm, Sweden. At that meeting, representatives from 122 countries agreed to create national plans of action and build a database of offenders and children at risk.

This week's meeting will also encourage governments to enact new laws that protect children from abuse and impose tough penalties on criminals, Bellamy said.

The scale of the problem is enormous. The United Nations Children's Fund released a report last week saying sex trafficking in children is growing and that each year more than one million additional youngsters, mostly girls, are bought and sold as sexual slaves.

Concrete figures, however, are hard to come by because traffickers work secretly, beyond the reach of many governments.

"There are only estimates: From 100,000 in the Philippines to 400,000 in India to 100,000 in Brazil to 35,000 in west Africa or 175,000 in eastern and central Europe," Bellamy said. "There was also a recent US study that said 325,000 children are used in the sex trade in the US, Canada and Mexico."

With the problems—and the number of children involved—differing greatly from country to country, it will be a challenge to come up with solutions, said Bellamy.

One preventive approach will concentrate on education.

"It is still estimated that there are 130 million children around the world who ought to be in primary schools and are not. Sixty percent are girls. These make up a large proportion of the kids, who are caught up in some form of exploitation or child labor," Bellamy said.

Unicef has cited poverty, discrimination against girls, war, organized crime, globalization, traditions and beliefs, dysfunctional families and the drug trade as the causes of child exploitation. *AP*

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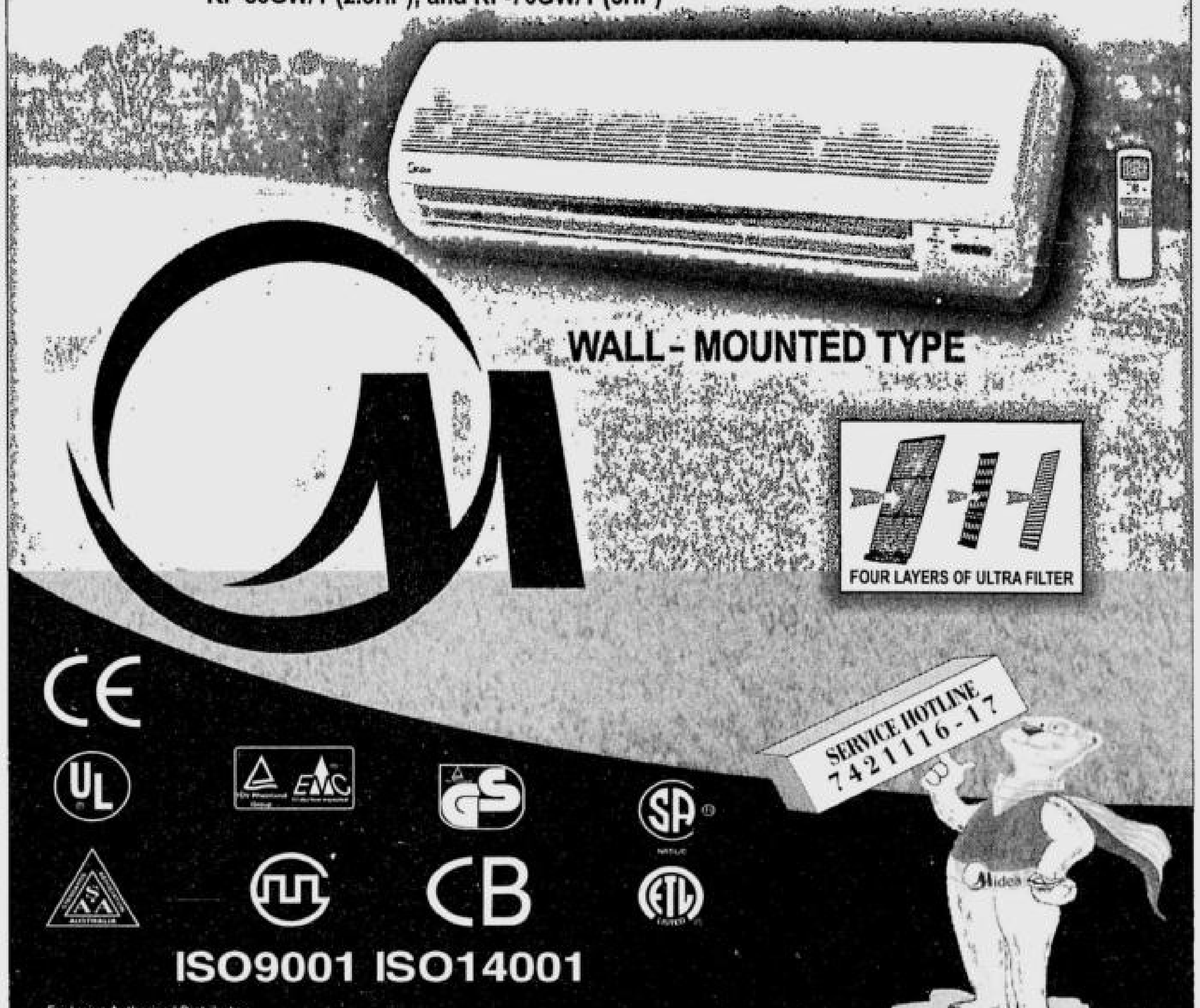

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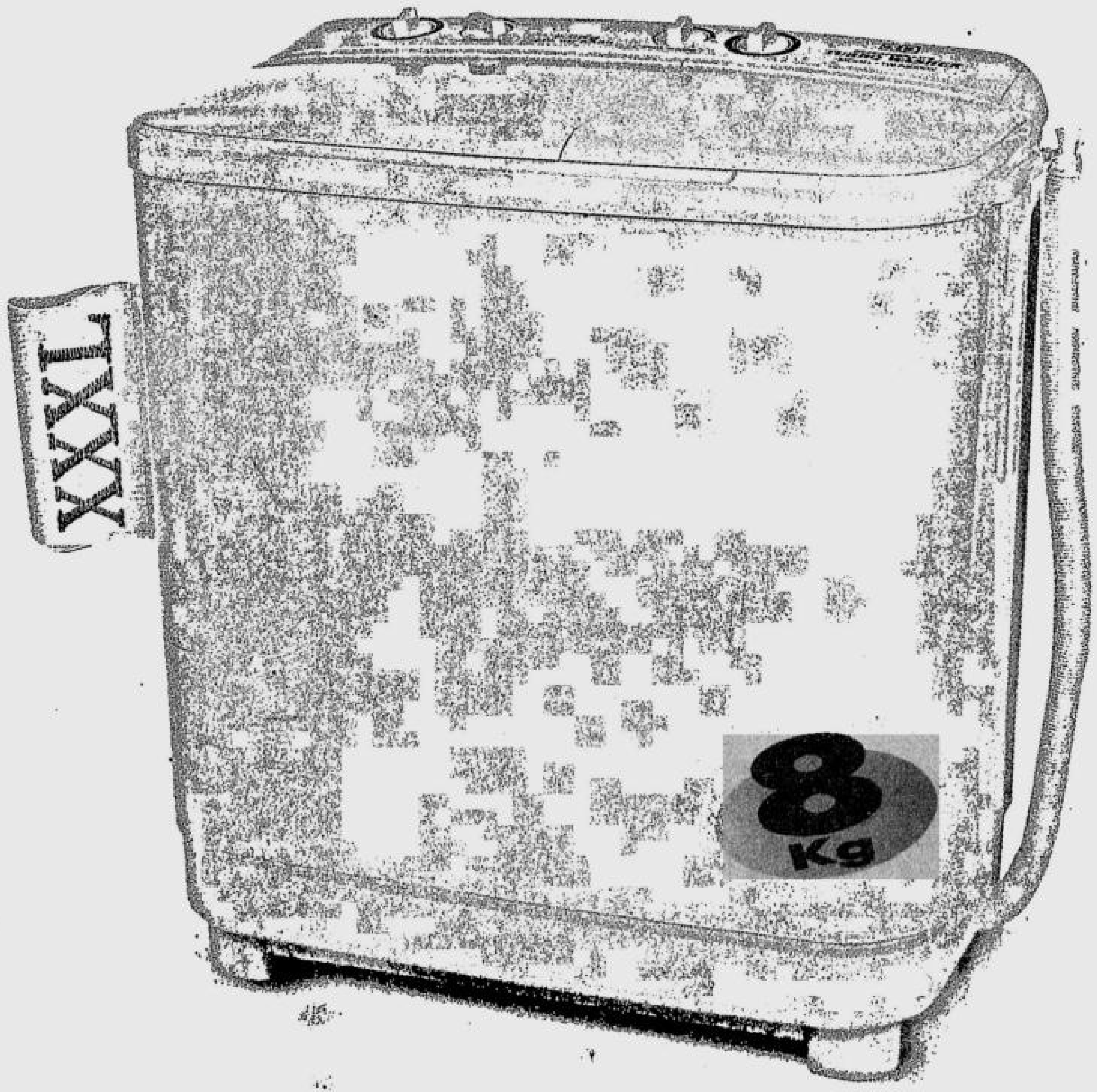

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GMA accuser didn't enter Palace through backdoor–Gloria secretary

By Carlito Pablo

MARCELO testifies before Senate blue ribbon committee on the alleged telecoms franchise scam. ERK ARAZAS/FILE PHOTO

BUSINESSMAN Pacifico "Pic" Marcelo III had been trying to set up a meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo since June and was only granted an audience on Aug. 16 because the President wanted to hear the "true story" of the telecommunications scandal.

This was the assertion of former presidential appointments secretary Marita "Mai-Mai" Jimenez, who walked the Inquirer through the Palace grounds following the route that Marcelo supposedly took, to show that the meeting with the President was neither clandestine nor a "backdoor" meeting.

Jimenez, now the Presidential adviser on the utilization of Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds, said the 20 to 30-minute meeting took place in the main living room of the Office of the President.

"This was not the first time the President had said yes to a request for a private meeting. It is customary for her (to accede to private meetings), especially if she wants to get to the bottom of sensitive matters," Jimenez said.

Jimenez recalled that she first met Marcelo at the Malacañang guesthouse one afternoon in June, about two months after the President had vetoed the congressional franchises for his Philippine Communications Clearinghouse Inc. and APC Wireless Interface Network.

The meeting had been arranged by a mutual friend, Cris Carreon, a member of the Edsa Commission who, like Marcelo, was in the information and telecommunications business.

Marcelo, according to Jimenez, wanted to meet with Ms Macapagal regarding the vetoes.

"But the President's guidelines are very strict in these cases—specific contracts should be referred to the agencies concerned. In this case, I told him (Marcelo) to go to Speaker Feliciano Belmonte (who could choose to) raise the matter with the President," Jimenez said.

Jimenez said she heard nothing more from Marcelo until the telecommunications controversy, in which First Gentleman Mike Arroyo was accused of taking a bribe, broke out.

This time, it was President Macapagal herself who told Jimenez that Marcelo was asking for an appointment.

"According to the President, a guy named Bing called up a member of her private staff, Jasmine, and said that Marcelo wanted to see Ms Macapagal in private," Jimenez said.

Jimenez was referring to Romulo "Bing" Retirado, a business associate of Marcelo's who was on Ms Macapagal's staff when she was a senator.

"So the President told me, 'Mai, this guy, Marcelo, is asking for an appointment supposedly to explain his side in the telecoms controversy,'" Jimenez said.

Jimenez said the President asked her to schedule a meeting, which was set between the oath-taking of new military generals and the President's dinner with members of Class 1971 of the Philippine Military Academy.

Through Jasmine, Jimenez said she was able to reach Marcelo by phone about three or four days before the meeting on Aug. 16.

In his affidavit, Marcelo had said he was "surprised" to get a call from Jimenez one day before the meeting telling him the President wanted to see him.

To this, Jimenez said, "I don't know if Marcelo would still be able to lie when I take the witness stand." Jimenez is scheduled to appear before the Senate blue ribbon committee on Thursday.

On the day of the meeting, Jimenez said she had her driver, using her Starex van, and a member of the Presidential Security Group, Sgt. Rosalie Abion, pick up Marcelo from the Wendy's restaurant on J.P. Laurel Street at about 5:30 p.m.

Upon entering Gate 6 of Malacañang, she said Marcelo called her up to ask that he be exempted from inspection and this was granted.

"Marcelo kept saying he didn't want to be seen by the press," Jimenez said.

From the van, Marcelo was escorted by Abion to the entrance of Heroes Hall where they took the stairs leading to the Ceremonial Hall.

"As you can see, there is no kitchen here contrary to what Marcelo claimed," Jimenez said, showing this reporter around. "It was a very busy day then and there were several people around."

The Heroes Hall was then being prepared for the dinner with PMA Class '71 while the Ceremonial Hall upstairs was being used for the swearing in of the new generals.

From the Ceremonial Hall, Marcelo was taken through the reception hall to the main living room of the Office of the President, which is beside the stairs from Heroes Hall.

On both sides of the main reception hall are located the working chambers of the Office of the President.

"Marcelo recalled that the room was full of portraits of former first ladies and this is because the portraits are meant for public viewing. This shows it was not a private room," Jimenez said.

Jimenez said that aside from the main and connecting stairs to the Ceremonial Hall, there is a third set of stairs—the private one which only the President can access.

"In his testimony, Marcelo recalled that he even ran into Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes on the stairs and this shouldn't be surprising because what he took was no secret passageway," Jimenez said.

Jimenez said that after the meeting, Marcelo called her up to thank her.

"The President acceded to meet with Marcelo because she wanted to hear his side and come up with the true picture," Jimenez said. "The President didn't expect Marcelo to twist (the facts around)."

In his affidavit, Marcelo said Ms Macapagal had demanded control of PCCI before she would recall her vetoes, a claim the President has strongly denied.

Jimenez said she didn't know how Marcelo left the Palace building and the grounds of Malacañang.

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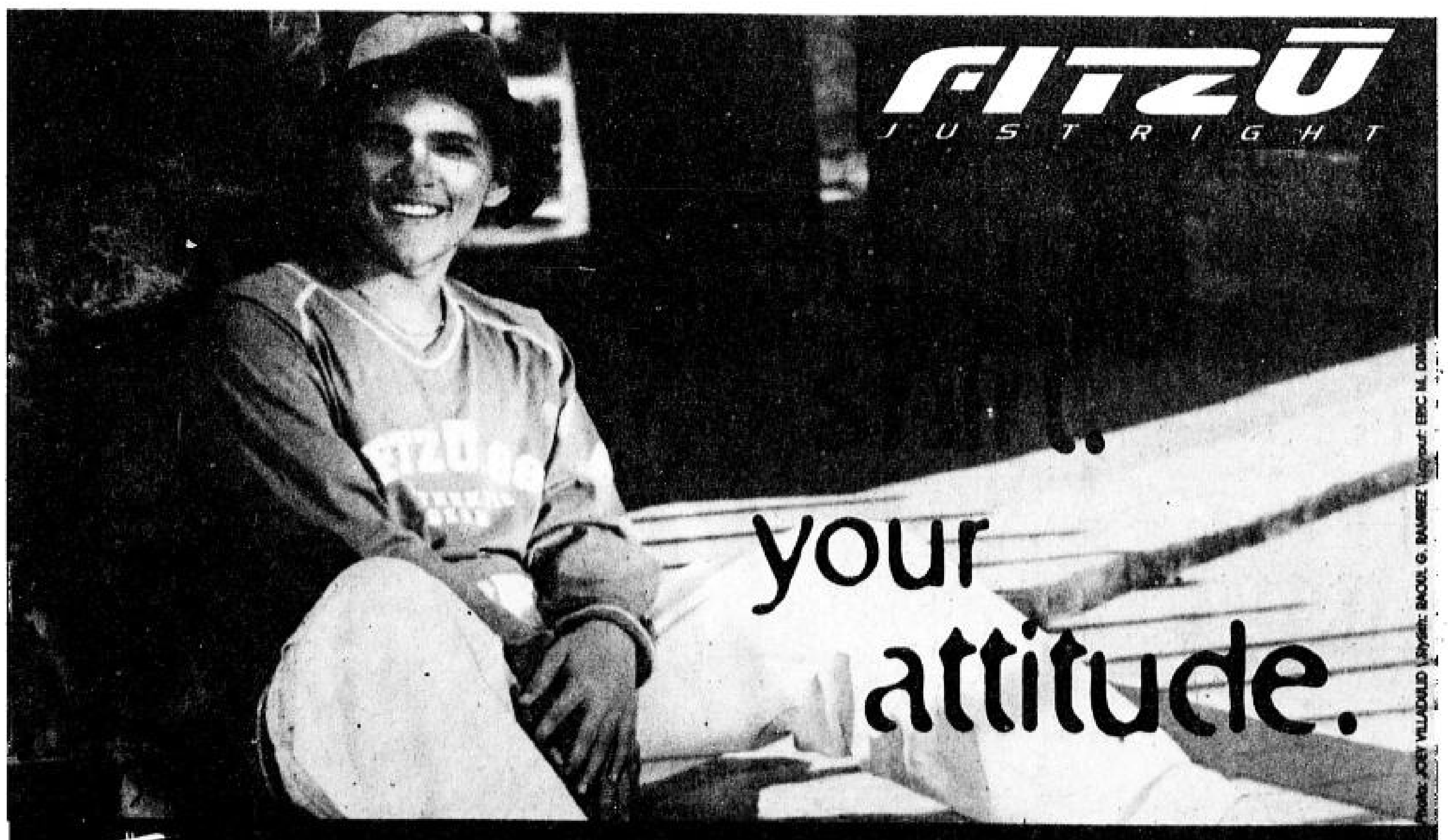

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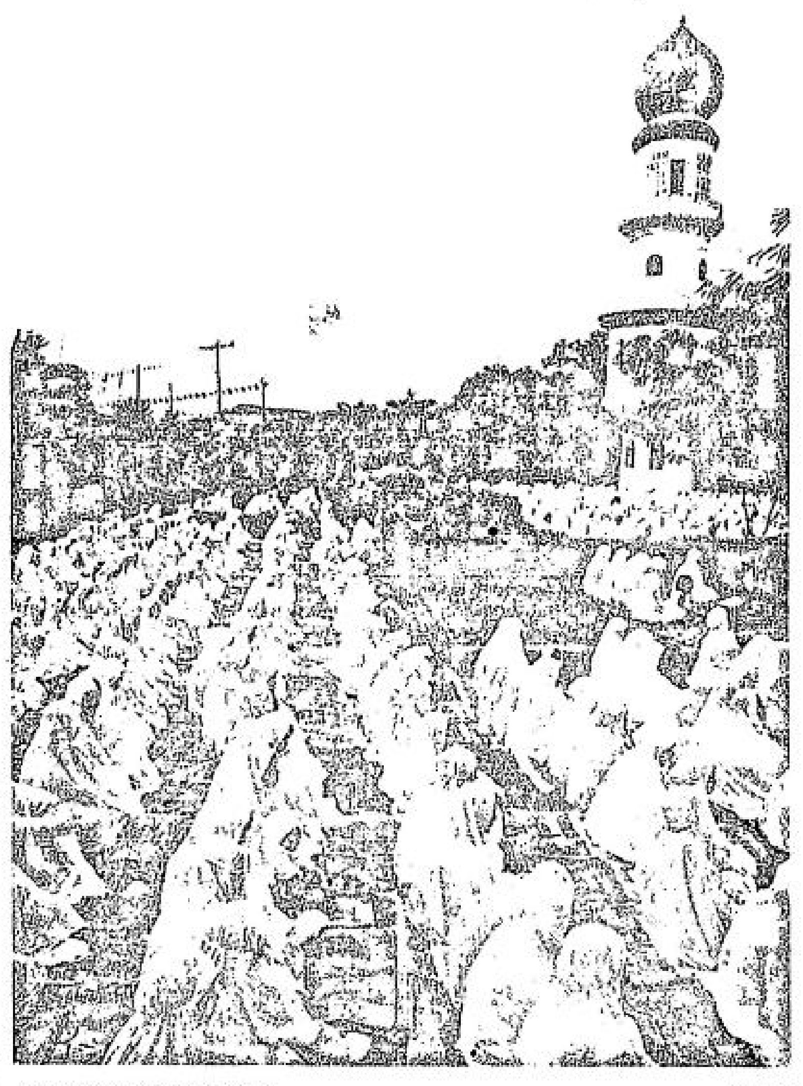
DAWN MASS REUTERS

An armed policeman stands guard outside a Catholic Church in Zamboanga City for the start of the Misa de Gallo early Sunday morning. Police are on high alert in this city against possible attacks from extremist groups.


RAMADAN OVER REUTERS

Muslim women attend prayer services outside a crowded mosque in Zamboanga City to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan on Sunday.

11 Filipino-Australian women receive honors

ELEVEN outstanding Filipino-Australian women recently received awards of recognition for their contributions to community service in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the Eden-Monaro region of New South Wales.

"These Filipino-Australian women have contributed greatly to the development of our racially diverse ACT community and certainly deserve to be recognized for their exemplary work," Sen. Kate Lundy said at the Filipino-Australian Women Achievement Award ceremony held at the historic Hyatt Hotel in Canberra in late November.

The 10 awardees were: Lydia Joanne Chinnock (singer-composer, painter and fashion designer); Rebecca Tingzon-Coggan (retired public servant and president of the ACT Filipino Association); Lily Cowan (retired schoolteacher working to empower Filipino women living in the rural areas of New South Wales); Noonee Doronila (rehabilitation counselor, two-time president of the Philippine-Australian Association and founding director of Tugpindulayaw theater group which provides opportunities the artistic development of Filipino-Australians); Luwalhati Alvero-Kendrick (an artist who is a former Palanca awardee for poetry); Lydia Pattugalan (retired public servant and senior citizen advocate); Estrella Pongsupath (retired public servant and community service volunteer); Maloys Flor-Singson (educator and community service volunteer); Lulu Respall-Turner (freelance editor, community volunteer, migrant women association leader); and Len Policarpio-Xyrakis (businesswoman and community service volunteer).

Lundy, Kate Gallagher, the local Member of the Legislative Assembly, Philippine Ambassador Delia Domingo-Albert handed out the trophies.

Kate Carnell, the popular former ACT chief minister, read the names of the 10 awardees who were chosen from among 32 nominees in a search conducted by the Filipino-Australian Women Task Force in Canberra.

"All the 32 nominees deserve to be recognized and thanked for their wonderful contributions in raising the status of women migrants in our community. The selection panel hqd a difficult time narrowing down the awardees to 10," Carnell said.

A surprise special award for exemplary achievement and outstanding community service was also given to Sister Angelita Marave, the founder of the Missionaries of Christ in the Eucharist.

Mace brings together lay people eager to develop their spiritual lives and do some apostolate work without necessarily taking religious vows, leaving their families or giving up their work. Mace operates in the Philippines, Australia and Italy.

The Filipino-Australian Women Achievement Awards project was undertaken by a task force composed of pastoral worker Sr. Pinky Aquino; lawyer Marlene Agmata-Tucker; political adviser George Lemon; public servant Eva Selorio; community leader and IT specialist Carl Singson and community volunteer Lettie Thompson.

Agmata-Tucker has announced the launching in early February 2002 of a book detailing the life stories of the 32 nominees to the Fawa awards.

"It is about time that Filipino migrants to Australia document their stories of migration. We have books on Italian, Eastern European, Polish, British and even Chinese migrants but I can only name three books written about Filipino-Australians and sadly, none of these three books is in the collection of the Australian National Library which collates Australia's history of migration for the past hundred years," Agmata-Tucker, the book editor, said.

The book is titled "Crossing the Barriers; Filipino Women Stories : An Anthology of Migration" and will be the Filipino community's contribution to the celebration of Australia's centenary of federation," Agmata-Tucker said.

‘Wait till you hear the rest of the (Ani) tape’

BY CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO AND CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

“WAIT till you hear the rest of the tape.”

Thus declared lawyer Ernesto Francisco Jr. yesterday of the audio tape he had played last week for the media to bolster his allegations that Ombudsman Aniano Desierto had taken a bribe.

Francisco, who filed the impeachment complaint against Desierto, said he has not submitted the tape to the House committee on justice which is set to decide tomorrow if his complaint is “sufficient in substance.”

Francisco said the tape, on which is recorded the hour-long conversation he had with ex-client Luke Roxas on Oct. 26, also contains discussions of a plan to bribe Desierto anew, this time to revive the case Roxas had wanted the Ombudsman to sit on in the first place in 1997.

“Part of the discussion was on how to bribe Desierto and how much, for him to revive the Petron scam case,” Francisco told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said he would release the rest of the tape “at the right time,” probably when the impeachment case against Desierto goes to trial in the Senate.

Francisco last week played only a three-minute excerpt of the tape—a portion of his conversation with Roxas about the alleged bribery of Desierto in 1997.

Yesterday, several cause-oriented groups weighed in with their views on the supposed bribe-taking by Desierto.

Plunder Watch, which is keeping a keen eye on the plunder trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada, said Desierto should welcome the impeachment complaint against him “if only to clear any doubts about his credibility.”

Dr. Carol Araullo, Plunder Watch convenor, said the complaint would “in fact provide leverage” to Desierto and his team of prosecutors working to convict Estrada at the Sandiganbayan.

“If there’s an investigation, he should welcome it,” Araullo told the INQUIRER yesterday. “It would allow him to exonerate himself... if he hurdles it, well and good.”

Lawyer Francisco, Plunder Watch, Bayan and Bayan Muna will hold a press conference Monday morning on the Desierto impeachment case.

Araullo admitted that the case could be distracting Desierto from the Estrada plunder trial. “But the quest for truth and justice in the Estrada case should not (get in the way of) the case against Desierto.”

The National Association of Corruption Prevention Units, on the other hand, said it supports Desierto in the impeachment case.

Nacpu, an anti-corruption watchdog with over one million members nationwide, said the allegations against the Ombudsman were “part of efforts by some groups to undermine the stability of the country.”

In a statement, Nacpu said, “We, the council of leaders of Nacpu, strongly denounce and condemn the people behind these destabilization moves and give our all-out support and confidence to Ombudsman Desierto.”

Among Nacpu leaders who signed the statement were Bishop Juan P. Pring, Lingkod president; Pastor Voltaire Acosta, president of CRFV; Esperanza Ocampo, president of the Philippine Government Employees Association; Willy Calma, president of Bantay Bayan Foundation; Victorio Rosales, president of Anti-Fake Land Titles, and the leaders of other people’s organizations.

The group said it would mobilize its members and hold a series of mass actions nationwide to dramatize their support for Desierto.

Nacpu is the umbrella organization of all corruption prevention units and junior graft-watch units numbering more than 1,300 nongovernment organizations nationwide, and represents religious, students, civic, urban poor and community-based groups.

It was formed to combat corruption in all levels of government.

Francisco has accused Desierto of taking P400,000 in cash and P273,000 worth of camera accessories from Roxas to defer his investigation of the Bank of Southeast Asia (BSA), which was formerly controlled by Roxas.

The bank had been charged with encashing Petron Corp. checks intended for the Bureau of Customs.

Roxas had feared a bank run if word of the Ombudsman’s probe of the bank leaked out.

Badoy stenographer fails to take polygraph test anew

BY P. TUBEZA

FOR THE SECOND time, Sandiganbayan Justice Anacleto Badoy’s stenographer has failed to take a lie detector test at the National Bureau of Investigation.

An NBI source said Janno del Rosario’s second polygraph test had to be rescheduled after his blood pressure again shot up.

The source, who requested anonymity, said the NBI plans to have two other members of Badoy’s staff take lie detector tests.

The staffers had allegedly entered the justice’s chambers on the day a court resolution affecting ousted President Joseph Estrada disappeared from the office.

The source said Del Rosario, whom Badoy suspected of taking the resolution, did not take the second polygraph test scheduled middle of last week due to high blood pressure.

Del Rosario also failed to take the first test on Dec. 7 after his blood pressure shot up. Del Rosario has a history of hypertension, the source said.

The source said that Del Rosario, who has since changed his lawyer, has promised to submit a written explanation to the NBI as to how his fingerprints ended up on documents that had been on top of the missing court resolution.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco had said that only Del Rosario’s fingerprints were found on the documents.

The missing resolution reportedly ordered the transfer of Estrada from his present detention at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City to the jail that was specially built for him in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

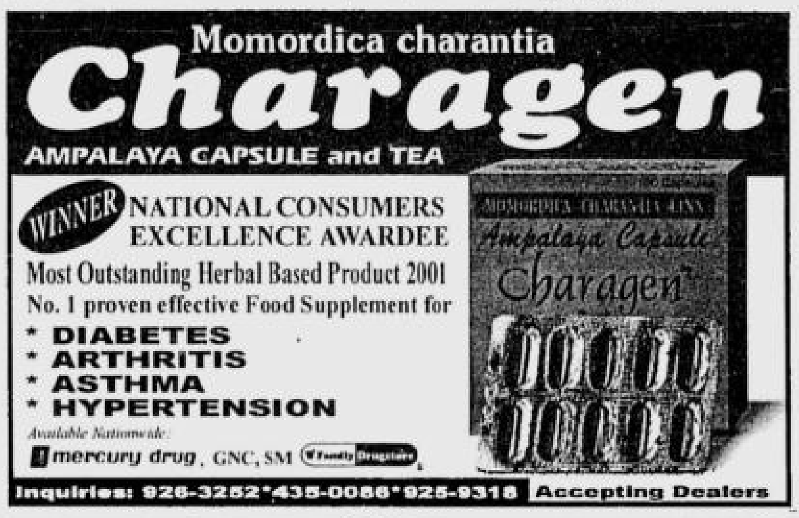
Wycoco said Badoy left the court resolution under the documents when he went to attend a hearing of Estrada’s plunder trial at around 1:30 p.m. on Nov. 26.

When he returned to his chambers at around 4 p.m., Badoy said the resolution was gone.

“We received information the two other employees also entered Badoy’s room when the resolution disappeared,” the source said.

But if the three employees are willing to take lie detector tests, their co-workers refused to even give statements to the NBI because “it would be (self-)incriminating,” the source said.

He said, “That is their right, but we hope they realize that we need to find out who was behind the resolution’s disappearance.”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Senators prefer realignment to cutting P18B from budget

BY ROCKY NAZARENO

A CONSENSUS is shaping up in the Senate to realign some P18 billion in the proposed 2002 national budget instead of cutting it outright as Sen. John Osmeña, the finance committee chair, has proposed.

This developed after Osmeña said that he was likely to accept a proposal made by opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara to realign the funds to more productive and urgent programs to stimulate and pump-prime the economy.

Osmeña said the slashed funds would most likely be re-channeled to the agriculture department to boost its food production program and to the education department.

During marathon plenary debates, Osmeña and Angara agreed that there was a compelling reason to channel money from unproductive and non-urgent spending items to programs that would generate jobs, enhance productivity and help fight massive poverty.

The senators said the re-alignment of the slashed funds would be made during the period of amendment on the proposed P780.8-billion budget on Tuesday.

Osmeña earlier said in his budget sponsorship speech that he would propose cutting P18.254 billion from the budget, including the P10 billion allocated for the Armed Forces Modernization Fund.

He also proposed reductions in the allocations for the Agrarian Reform Fund (P3.8 billion), Commission on Elections (P1.056 billion), the Casecon dam (P1.056 billion), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (P925 million), Department of Transportation and Communications (P444 million), Pasig River Rehabilitation (P300 million) and the payments to the Soceite Generale de Surveillance (SGS).

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Holiday politics

EDITORIALS

TODAY, for the first time in our short history, the country celebrates the end of the Muslim season of Ramadan as a national holiday. Eid'l Fitr, or Hari-Raya Puasa, marks the completion of the Islamic faith's 30-day period of purification. Ramadan this year actually ended yesterday, but to allow the entire country to appreciate the importance of the occasion, Malacañang set today aside as a special non-working holiday.

It is a symbolic gesture that is both strategically sound and tactically astute.

In declaring a holiday, the President has proven that in the management of symbols she is truly her father's daughter. Diosdado Macapagal changed the date of the country's day of independence from July 4 (when the Third Republic was born in the ashes of World War II) to June 12 (the date of Aguinaldo's famous proclamation). With a similar display of presidential will, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has elevated an important Muslim holy day into the same level as the traditional national holidays of Christmas, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

The declaration is sound policy. It highlights the many Muslim strands that make up the sometimes faded but still colorful fabric of our nation. It communicates respect for the Islamic faith and its millions of Filipino faithful in unequivocal terms. It demonstrates the public's growing sensitivity to Muslim issues of disadvantage and discrimination.

The President's declaration is no less valid for being a tactical master stroke. The government is conducting pursuit operations against the Abu Sayyaf, a band of criminals who hide under the banner of Islam. The administration was one of the earliest and remains one of the strongest defenders of the US policy against an international terrorism network with Islamist pretensions, and of the US-led war in Afghanistan. Not least, the government is finessing a transition of power in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, a diplomatically fraught prosecution of renegade Moro leader Nur Misuari and a still-unfinished peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The simple but symbolic declaration thus sends the clear message that the government makes a distinction between the faith of Islam and the misguided behavior of some of its militants.

This is an important distinction. By itself it will not solve anything, but if we consider the desperation of predominantly Muslim communities in certain parts of the south, a Muslim holiday celebrated nationwide may help ignite a chain reaction of mutual understanding.

We think, for example, of the long-suffering people of the island of Basilan. They have endured the clamorous violence of the terrorist and the silent violence of rank poverty. In their reduced state, however, the presence of some 8,000 military troops (all in pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf) can only add to a sense of uncertainty and confusion. In these circumstances, it is very easy to lose sight of the forest for the trees, to mistake the military presence as yet another sign of either political indifference or government abuse.

We hope that through simple but widely shared initiatives like the holiday declaration, the valiant people of Basilan will begin to see more light at the end of what is admittedly a very long tunnel.

Political holiday

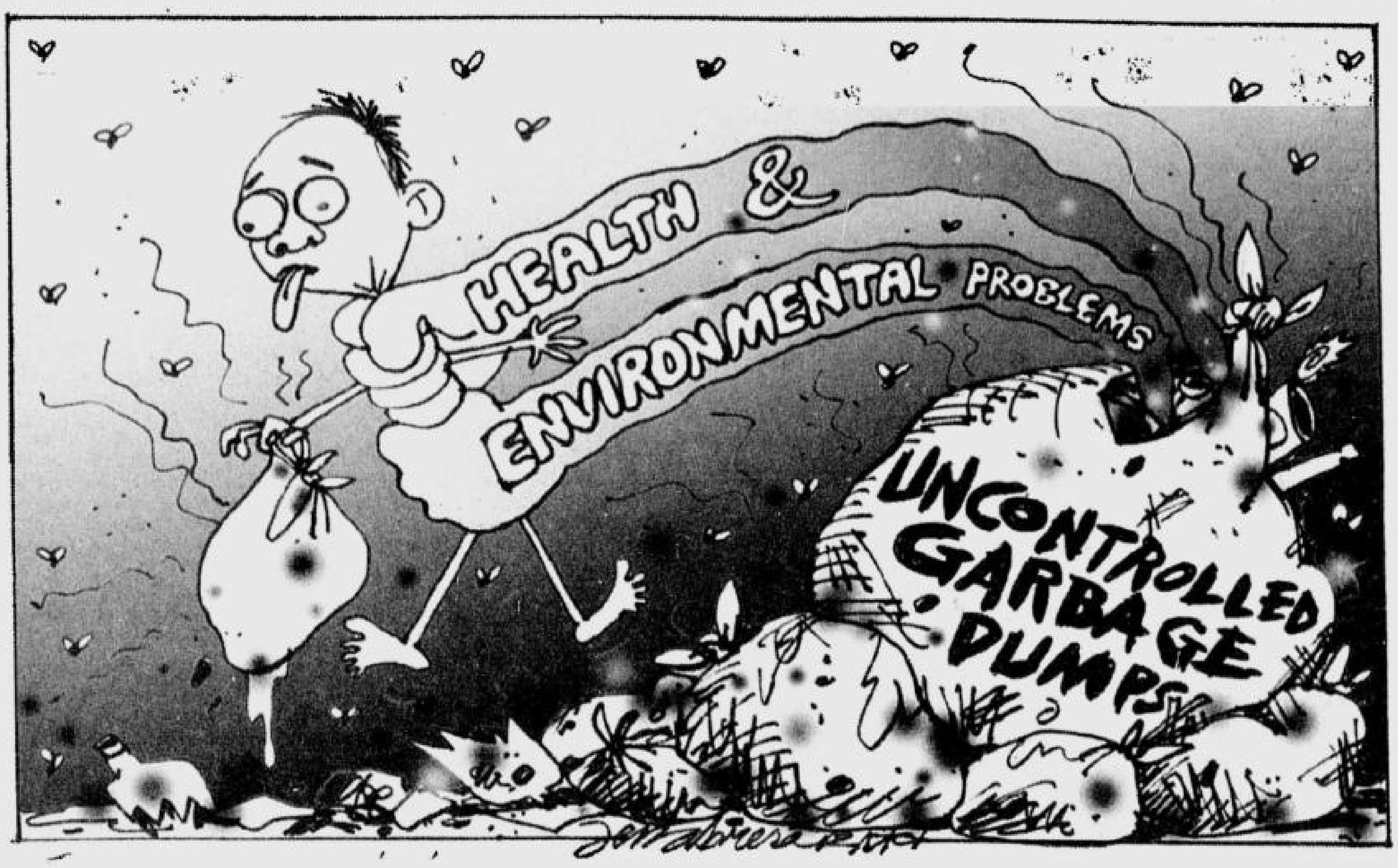
THE PRESIDENT'S call for a one-year moratorium on politicking did not exactly fall on deaf ears. Opposition leaders heard her, all right, but they did not like what they heard.

The problem is at least as old as philosophy itself; the exchange of words between the administration and the opposition on this matter suffers from the lack of a common definition of terms. What does politicking mean, anyway? Sen. Loi Ejercito Estrada thought Presidential Spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao's disclosure of Sen. Panfilo Lacson's secret meeting in Sabah was politicking of the rankest sort. But Tiglao's statements suggest that Lacson was engaged in political grandstanding, nothing less. Which is which?

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. correctly pointed out that the opposition (and indeed all public servants) had the duty to point out official wrongdoing. Did the President mean to exempt her administration from close scrutiny for an entire year?

Nothing in the President's statement suggests anything of this sort, but who can say for sure? She did not define her terms. Or perhaps Senator Pimentel was being obtuse?

The resulting cacophony offers us the best proof that the appeal was necessary. But it is also the surest sign that marking a political holiday of this sort is next to impossible.



Why DPWH repairs streets that don't need repairs

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IF you are wondering why streets in good condition are being dug up to be repaired while other streets urgently in need of repairs are neglected and new streets remain uncompleted (As I See It, 12/10,11/01) here is an explanation by Oscar P. Cammayo, district engineer of the Quezon City First Engineering District. Cammayo has jurisdiction over Tandang Sora Street in Quezon City about which we wrote in this column last week.

The middle of Tandang Sora was dug up and reconcreted several days ago, creating a monstrous traffic jam, in and around the corner of Tandang Sora and Commonwealth Avenue. The cementing has been finished but traffic congestion remains because there are still barricades around the repaired portions waiting for the concrete to dry. Tandang Sora was in good condition and I asked why it was being repaired at this time when there are other streets urgently needing repairs, like the nearby Congressional Avenue. Their repair will greatly ease traffic on Commonwealth Avenue but these streets cannot be completed for lack of funds. I mentioned other streets still in good condition but are already being repaired, such as Edsa near the Kamuning market, Imelda Avenue in Cainta and Commonwealth in Fairview. A source at the Department of Public Works and Highways told me that the reason is that budgets of government offices have to be spent before the end of the year, otherwise the money will go to the General Fund and the department budget may be reduced the next year.

Engineer Cammayo asked for a meeting to explain the case of Tandang Sora which is under his jurisdiction. His explanation:

1. It was Cammayo himself, he said, who inspected Tandang Sora and decided which sections to be replaced with new concrete pavement.

2. He said the fund used for the repairs came from the outlay for "maintenance." This cannot be used for constructing new roads because the funding for them should come from "capital outlay."

3. The DPWH places emphasis on road maintenance, he said, "because it is not reasonable to keep on constructing new roads" unless the existing roads are not properly maintained.

4. He thanked me for "stating that this section of Tandang Sora is in perfectly good condition" (except for the missing sidewalks). He said however that "unless periodic maintenance activities are undertaken, the whole stretch would easily deteriorate. Except for two outermost lanes, the two inner lanes were concreted more than 15 years ago and gradual replacement of damaged sections have to be undertaken."

5. "If our only intention is to use up unutilized DPWH budget at this time of the year," Cammayo said, "it would have been very convenient for us to merely asphalt overlay the observed intersection, a job which could be accomplished overnight."

6. He explained that any unused budget at the end of the year does not automatically revert back to the General Fund. "All that is required by the DBM is for funds to be obligated before year-end. Actual accomplishment could be undertaken without any time limit. What is important is that there should be a valid creditor by year-end," he said.

I am not blaming Cammayo but the policies of the government for this paradox. Taxpayers find it strange that so much money is wasted to repair roads that are still in good condition while others that really need repairs are neglected. Or why there seems to be an abundance of money for maintenance while other roads cannot be completed for lack of funds.

Another paradox: Congress does not appropriate enough funds for DPWH projects but appropriates so much money for the pork barrel of legislators. They say that much of the pork barrel is used for public works projects anyway. But legislators don't want the DPWH to use their pork for urgent projects. They want the funds for their pet projects even if the latter are not necessary. With the pork barrel system, we actually have two DPWHs—the real one and the fake one in Congress with about 300 bogus engineers.

* * *

The St. James Academy of Malabon City, my high school alma mater, is celebrating its 75th founding anniversary and Grand Alumni Homecoming on Dec. 29. The reason I'm announcing this is to have an excuse to say that St. James Academy (SJA) should not be mistaken for St. James School (SJS).

St. James Academy was founded by the Maryknoll Sisters 75 years ago and run by them until recently when it and Maryknoll College on Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City (which became Miriam University) were transferred to private groups. St. James School, on the other hand, was founded only several years ago and has no religious congregation behind it, although the name suggests that. Because of the name, many people mistakenly believe that it is a religious school and even think it is SJA run by the Maryknoll Sisters. The false impression obviously works to the advantage of the latter school.

St. James Academy is named after St. James the Great, whose feast day falls on July 25. St James School, on the other hand, is named after its owner, Jaime Torres, who is not a saint. The accusations against him you must have read in the newspapers years ago.

That is the reason why students and alumni (among whom are Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and his two singer-sisters, Armida Siguion-Reyna and Irma Potenciano), asked me to clarify the difference between the two similarly named schools. (I think SJA should ask the courts to stop SJS from using the name St. James.)

The point is justice

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE RULING may be well past due, but it's welcome nonetheless. It gives some cheer this Christmas amid our spectacularly cheerless plight. I add my voice to the chorus of voices singing praises to the Supreme Court for its decision to declare the coco levy fund that went to buy SMC shares public in character. In its decision, the Supreme Court said there was prima facie evidence that Danding Cojuangco used money that belonged to the coconut farmers to buy into San Miguel Corp. But wasn't that glaringly obvious from the start?

You do continue to rue the delay despite the victory. If the Supreme Court of Cory Aquino's time had made that ruling, Cojuangco might never have been able to come back from exile to reclaim SMC. Which he did monstrously successfully, and which he threatens to continue to do notwithstanding this decision.

But let us praise where praise is due. The Supreme Court ruling is a tremendous moral victory, and a moral victory, contrary to its conventional meaning as something that brings only comfort and not tangible gain, offers incalculable gain for the country. The gain for the coconut farmers is of course obvious. Less obvious, but infinitely more far-reaching, is the opening it offers for prosecuting Cojuangco and the other Marcos cronies.

I can't understand why people see only the first and not the second. This isn't just a matter of recovering loot, this is a matter of righting wrongs. This isn't just a matter of rewarding the innocent, this is a matter of punishing the guilty. This isn't just a matter of law, this is a matter of justice. If there is prima facie evidence that the money Cojuangco took from the UCPB to buy shares in SMC wasn't his, then there is prima facie evidence he stole—or more than stole, pillaged. He should now be sharing the company of his good friend, Erap, his other good friend, Marcos, now having crossed to the other life. I don't see why we should be looking only at ways to stop Cojuangco from continuing to control SMC through an alliance with Kirin Beer. We should be looking at ways to stop him from continuing to live the life of a free man.

The significance of the Supreme Court ruling is not unlike that of Honolulu Judge Manuel Real when he declared that there was prima facie evidence that the torture of political prisoners during martial law was the product of state sanction and not merely individual whim. Which was the premise all along of the torture victims who filed a class suit against the Marcoses. It wasn't just the military officials who wrought the scars on their bodies—and souls—it was Marcos himself.

Real's court's acceptance of that premise opened the doors not just for indemnification but for retribution. For many political prisoners I know, who felt tortured again in recalling their ordeal—they had shoved it to the obscurest corners of their minds—that was the real victory. It opened the way to finding true justice, which was not just indemnification but the punishment of those who had done them wrong. At the very least, the ruling made the wrongdoing real, by affirming it and holding it up to the world for the iniquity that it was.

That is not saying that the indemnification is not important. It is. Heaven knows most of the torture victims need it. It is not merely that they are poor—the torturers were a little more careful with prisoners from middle class and well-off families and applied the sadistic energies indefatigably to the wretched of the earth—it is also that many of them have been impaired in mind and body and have problems finding work, or keeping it.

The Supreme Court ruling on the coco levy fund also does more than open the door for the coconut farmers to reclaim their money. Although that too is a resounding enough victory in itself. Particularly in this case, where the money was ripped off from dirt-poor farmers. I don't know why only the *sakadas*, or the sugar farm workers, have the reputation for living spectacularly desperate lives. You go to Quezon and Bicol, and you'll see that coconut farmers aren't that much better off. You go there in fact and you'll understand why those areas became very fertile grounds not just for coconuts but also for rebels.

While at this, though, I can only hope the groups representing the coconut farmers have learned some lessons from the way the groups representing the torture victims handled their own case. Which was spectacularly messily. To this day, the torture victims have not gotten a cent from the Marcos estate despite Real's ruling, thanks in no small way to their well-publicized bickering, one group claiming to represent the plaintiffs more than the other. The only thing worse than being divided and ruled by the enemy is dividing oneself willy nilly and being ruled, or worse laughed at, by the enemy.

But more than the process that will return the money where it belongs, there is the process that will put the people who stole it where they belong. That is what this ruling allows. Etta Rosales has every reason to fulminate against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's "wishy-washy attitude" toward Cojuangco. Indeed, against the President's capacity only to see the investment aspect of the Kirin deal. I myself was bowled over last Saturday when I heard the President say on TV she wasn't even considering taking Cojuangco out of SMC. That is the least she should do. The most is to slap pillage charges on him before the year is out.

We keep asking why we can't go forward, why we keep retreating two steps after advancing one step. The answer is right there, staring us in the face. Because we keep saying, "Forget the past, life goes on." Life does not go on with the guilty remaining unpunished. Life does not go on with crime being left to fester. Life does not go on with justice not being done.

Death does.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

High Court's Xmas gift to the people

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE SUPREME Court ruled last week in a decision penned by Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban that the coconut levy funds (initially amounting to P85.7 million) used by Eduardo Cojuangco and his group to buy into the First United Bank and set it up as the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) in 1975 were public in character, because they were raised with the use of the police and taxing powers of the state. As such, said the SC, it was the government, through the PCGG, that had the right to vote the UCPB shares sequestered in 1986; thus, the high court effectively paved the way for the change in the composition of the 15-member UCPB board controlled by Cojuangco.

* * *

But beyond this, the SC ruling on the public character of the levy funds is most pivotal, as this is bound to affect the resolution of various civil cases now pending before the Sandiganbayan, that have impleaded various personalities such as Cojuangco, Ma. Clara Lobregat, Jose Eleazar Jr., Hermenegildo Zayco, Danilo Ursua and Accra lawyers such as Sen. Edgardo Angara, Teodoro Regala and Jose C. Concepcion (not the Namfrel guy). It's also bound to affect the disposition of other assets purchased with coco levy funds through the UCPB, including the crown jewel, the San Miguel Corp.; some 47 percent of the total SMC shares were purchased with levy funds. It should be noted that the original intention of Marcos' PD 755 in setting up the UCPB was to help answer the "perennial credit problems of the coconut farmers," but this function was soon enough eclipsed by that presidential decree's mandate that the UCPB act as the coco levy depository bank. Cojuangco, as the bank's president, was also designated the levy fund administrator.

* * *

The pivotal decision was arrived at by the SC after so many failed attempts in both chambers of Congress to legislate bills that would declare the levy funds public. Among those who tried to legislate such bills, to no avail, were Alberto Romulo, Wigberto Tañada, Oscar Santos, Pedro Romualdo Sr., Nene Pimentel, Leticia Shahani, Juan Flavier and Leonardo Montemayor. With the Cojuangco people comprising a formidable bloc in Congress, the high court became the only hope to get the coco levy funds declared public funds—away from the hands of powerful private individuals who had lorded over them for decades.

Last Friday the SC ruling came as a beautiful surprise Christmas gift to the 3 to 4 million coconut farmers and their families. Many of these farmers have remained dirt-poor over the decades despite the levy funds, now estimated to be worth about P130 billion, that were extracted from them over nine years through a series of Marcos decrees, supposedly for their benefit. Because the coco farmers are found in perhaps as many as half of the country's provinces, the SC decision can rightly be deemed a Christmas gift to the Filipino people as well.

* * *

To be sure, the coco levy case is far from over and a lot of work has to be done. Cojuangco's lawyers are expected to file a motion for reconsideration, while the PCGG is expected to push for the election of a new UCPB board at the next stockholders' meeting in March 2002, to replace the Cojuangco-controlled board; the latter's tenure has been frozen for almost a year after the SC issued a status-quo ruling in response to the PCGG's attempt to stop that group from voting the PCGG's shares in the UCPB, which was allowed by the Sandiganbayan last February.

But as Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo recently stressed to me, the new SC ruling made a more categorical characterization of the levy funds, unlike its opinion of October 1989 that merely said they were "imbued with public interest." It thus has laid the foundation for an effective recovery of the levy assets, because now, the burden of proof has shifted from the PCGG to Cojuangco and Co.; they now have to prove that they acquired their UCPB shares legitimately. In addition, the SC has set a deadline of six months to the Sandiganbayan to finish this case—a welcome news for something that has dragged on for 16 years now. To be sure, there are predatory creatures in government too, but the farmers perhaps stand a better chance to get something from it, given the checks and balances and the citizens' militancy, rather than the old private group.

No wonder PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac is smiling a Christmas smile. Actually, she has every right to a Christmas smile, for SC insiders attest that her presence at the PCGG's helm helped a lot in the magistrates' decision. Let's pray that Yorac's team never betrays the people's trust.

* * *

Over the weeks, rumors had flown thick and fast that the SC was about to hand down a ruling on the nature of the levy funds. Word leaked out that the Court had voted on it last Tuesday, but nobody, not even Malacañang knew what the results were, and when they would be out. In fact every indication was that the Palace was resigned to the resolution of the levy case within two years yet. Apparently, however, the Cojuangco camp knew that a SC ruling was forthcoming, which may help explain its efforts to strike a "settlement" with the Palace on the 27 percent SMC shares, and to get Kirin Beer of Japan to buy 15 percent shares of SMC, worth over half a billion dollars. The PCGG appears to have an idea too, as it tried to keep the settlement with Cojuangco at bay, pending the SC decision.

* * *

The 10 majority votes rendered the levy decision truly convincing, but Court insiders attest to the heated debates among the magistrates over the months since the levy issue was referred by the Third Division to the court *en banc* in Baguio City last April. I understand that as in the plunder case, the Court was initially almost equally divided on the issue, but as the weeks of oral-arguments wore on, some magistrates were slowly won over to what became known as the "public-character test."

As *ponente*, Panganiban saw the heart of the matter was this: in normal cases only registered owners of shares can vote in a corporation; as conservator of sequestered assets, the PCGG normally does not vote, except in certain cases, where it has to first satisfy a "two-tiered test" in order to be able to vote the sequestered shares. These are, if the PCGG can prove *prima facie* that the shares were ill-gotten, and that voting them is necessary so as not to dissipate the shares. In the case of the UCPB, however, Panganiban argued, the shares were acquired with coco levy funds, a fact that even Cojuangco's lawyers admit. He opined that levy funds are not ill-gotten but public money raised with the use of state police and taxation powers. It might be useful to point out here that perhaps the UCPB shares became "ill-gotten" only in the sense that they have been in the hands of private people who have to explain how they paid for them.

Tragic end for the 1996 Peace Agreement?

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Fr.Eliseo R. Mercado Jr., OMI

THE "WAR" between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front forces in Sulu will be known as the beginning of a new page in the unfolding history of the Bangsamoro people post-1996 Peace Agreement.

There was much fanfare and a festive mood all over the Philippines and the Islamic world as the historic agreement was brought home from Jakarta to Manila and signed in Malacañang on Sept. 2, 1996. No doubt, that was a historic moment for both the Philippine government and the MNLF as well as for all the people of Southeast Asia and for a world yearning for peace.

The only issue left was the reality spelled out by then Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas who chaired the formal peace negotiations on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Countries. In his stentorian Oxford English he said, "It may be worth reiterating that the real hard work begins after the signing of the agreement. For a peace agreement, or any agreement for that matter, does not implement itself: it assumes concrete reality only on the accretion of activities completed, the solid implementary achievements, contributions, cooperation and often inevitable sacrifices by all those who are supposed to make it work."

The central figure in all this new drama that was unfolding was "Maas" Nur Misuari, the chair of the MNLF. He was the representation of a rebel and a community of people, the Bangsamoro that brought the peace process into a mutually acceptable political peace formula.

Ambassador Manuel Yan, the indefatigable peace negotiator and the epitome of the word "gentleman," steered the course of the peace process into that political settlement known as the 1996 Final Peace Accord.

Yan used to point out that peace is a most difficult pursuit in the midst of decades and even centuries of misunderstanding, prejudice and inequity. He reminded people engaged in the peace process to show sincerity, persistence and perseverance—coupled with courage and sacrifice.

The initial implementation of the 1996 Peace Agreement had its best years during the time of President Ramos, the man responsible for reinitiating the peace process with the MNLF, and with courage and persistence, pursued it to the end.

His words at the historic signing of the Peace Agreement were: First, a quotation from Ninoy Aquino, "Must we relive the agonies and the blood-letting of the past that brought forth our Republic, or can we sit down as a brother and sister and discuss our differences with reason and goodwill?"

The second quote was taken from Jose Rizal's "Mi Ultimo Adios." "When my death is forgotten, my grave unmarked, let the plow turn the earth where I lie. May my dust make fertile the field. Where the grass grows thickly, there I dwell.

"When night comes and my grave in darkness lies, break not the peace, kneel before the mystery. If you hear the sound of music, be not afraid. It is I."

For a beautiful beginning, indeed, a very promising one, the "war" in Sulu was very tragic.

The fact that the GRP and the MNLF conflicts have already been successfully and peacefully settled, reversion to the status of belligerency is a tragedy and should never be an option.

There is need for cooler heads to prevail both from the government and the MNLF; a new courage and an enduring patience to sit down and discuss the differences in the implementation of the peace agreement. It is not a perfect document, but it is a real formula for peace, a real beginning of a new relation not only between the GRP and the MNLF but also for the Bangsamoro, Christians and lumads of Mindanao.

The war in Sulu pushes people, especially the AFP and peace advisers to do the popular thing—that is, to go to war and write "finis" to Misuari and his MNLF. But do we truly believe that we can write "finis" to Misuari and his comrades? Are we not deluding ourselves that an all-out war against Misuari and his MNLF would resolve the crisis?

Last year, President Estrada, Secretary Orlando Mercado and Gen. Angelo Reyes led the country into accepting the same illusion that an all-out war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front would solve the problem.

Estrada and Mercado are gone. Reyes is still around. Would the government succumb once again to swallow that illusory quick fix?

It is not late yet to choose the path of peace even after the first shots of "war" had already been fired. Let us not be tempted by the arrogance of power and the judgments coming from our prejudices blind us to see peaceful options and alternatives. The AFP may be able to take all the MNLF camps in Sulu by the sheer might of its firepower, but the fact remains that guns never quell the dreams and aspirations of people. For whatever side we are on and whatever sympathies we may have, the paramount importance is to avoid the path of war! This is an appeal for reason and goodwill, as well as for courage and persistence in our pursuit of that elusive PEACE in Southern Philippines. Mindanao and the country cannot afford another war! Leadership is not embracing a popular cause, because leadership is not a popularity contest. It is pursuing a noble vision for the country and our diverse peoples and leading them to the realization of that vision no matter the cost.

In this difficult time, we must appeal to the President and to the MNLF to heed the voice of sobriety and moderation. Let's not allow war to be the preferred policy in resolving our differences. Let not tragedy visit us again in Mindanao by choosing the path of war.

What a beautiful sight is the Afghan woman

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

UNVEILED in the luminous light of liberation, what a beautiful sight is the Afghan woman on this glorious day of Islam's Eid'l Fitr, a day of charity for those most needful of receiving, and giving it. How perfect for this season between Jewish Hanukkah and Christianity's holiest night.

Glimpsed brightly through the looking glass of worldwide television, shyly smiling for the cameras, with coal-black eyes shining, she sparks in us, recognition of a shared, and cherished, humanity.

At first, we saw her only as an amorphous blue *burqa*, which covered her from head to foot, as if the whole sky had fallen upon her, and shrunk her world to the radius of an encompassing shroud. Who were these covered ghosts that floated into our awareness through the unblinking eye of all-day, all-night news, that, speechless and faceless, gave self-evident witness of something seriously wrong in Afghanistan?

Well at one time, they were 60 percent of the educational infrastructure, half the government bureaucracy, 40 percent of the doctors, and of course, all of the mothers, sisters and daughters of the Afghan people. They will surely be again with the Taliban demolished.

But you could not help but wonder. What was it that the Taliban found so threatening, so hideous, so provocative, or unbearable about their women folk? Under Taliban rule, they fell into the oblivion of nonentities, totally deprived of their rights, their jobs, their hope. Notwithstanding, they surely still bore the brunt of daily life, cooking, cleaning, caring, dying. Even as surely, they must have been loved by their husbands and their children, so why would the Taliban despise and maltreat them?

The rest of the world has come to regret that it long ignored that plight, a symptom of the malignancy that afflicted all of Afghanistan since the Taliban took over in 1996, a mercifully truncated reign. But now, there is renewed expectation that women will have a better lot in that country. It is a small start, but two women became part of Afghanistan's 30-member interim cabinet as a result of the recent process to create a government for Afghanistan in Bonn, Germany.

They surely have a long way to go. The war has only parted the heavy veil of time itself, to reveal how intolerance and absolutism still find justification in the will of God as divined by men. This fallacy was already ancient when Kandahar was a fortress only newly built by Alexander the Great. So it is not peculiar to Islam or Afghanistan. Our own violent tendencies toward women and children must share the same roots. It is just that the Neanderthal in some men have learned to quote from the Koran, as easily as they do from the Bible or the Torah, (in a possible disparagement of Neanderthals) and also seized state power somewhere.

Unfortunately these holy books are not democratic constitutions. While they are profound sources of human wisdom, they are also powerful icons that guard the demarcation line between cultures, traditions and nations. When the Taliban started destroying giant Buddhist statuary and monuments in Afghanistan earlier this year, it was with an infidelphobic zealotry not seen since, well, the Christian Crusades. But I'm sure they did so out of a genuine belief that smashing such alien idolatry was Allah's will, and therefore the duty of every good fundamentalist Islamic state.

The oppression of women was cut from the same cloth. The civic lesson we can learn from the recent experience of Afghanistan under the Taliban rule is that humanity cannot abide religious totalitarianism any more than it can the communist kind. Every country needs to adopt secular democracy seriously so that all religions can flourish together, and all men live in peace as brothers and sisters whose differences are less than their common and vital concerns.

The upwelling in religious fervor that has taken place all over America following the events of Sept. 11 is not in spite of secular democracy, but because of it. This phenomenon of a vigorous religious diversity and total freedom of religion for everyone is only possible when the State explicitly, and religiously, observes strict neutrality among such implacable and irreconcilable things as theologies and religious symbolism. Freedom of religion is impossible without secular democracy forbidding favoritism. It's all about that all too necessary separation, especially in the realm of symbols. I think this issue is important because it actually holds the key to the problem of Muslim Mindanao.

Speaking however, about idolatry, I must say I was impressed by a fairly reasonable simulacrum, on Sunday's front page of our favorite national newspaper, which featured President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in a rail-to-rail-color photo of cinematic proportions. Yes, what a lovely sight indeed is the Filipino woman, especially as President, with "spiffy hairstyle" and "understated makeup." Her beauty secret borders on the supernatural, the caption alleges, having to do with her intense faith in God and "friendship with the Lord." I'm sure the caption writers were just being cryptically adoring so as not to be hyperbolic.

The very idea that Filipinas need liberation may strike some as superfluous, since it is alleged by some that they already hold the levers of power all over the country, at least in the classes and institutions where it is worth holding power. They point to the fact that of our four most recent presidents, there is the pleasing symmetry of two men and two women. Then there is the story, maybe apocryphal, about a Filipina beauty contestant asked about her opinion of women's liberation. To which she unhesitatingly replied, "What, become the equal of men? Why should we lower ourselves to that level?"

One territory for the women's movement to conquer in the Philippines is within the clergy and the Church hierarchy. Their exclusion from the priesthood and the highest offices of the Church is illogical and anachronistic.

Anatomy of a lie

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

LAST Dec. 7, businessman Pacifico Marcelo, while testifying before the Senate blue ribbon committee, stated in answer to a question posed by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. that the story behind the Nov. 27 headline of the INQUIRER ("I can take this entire house down") was a fabrication.

Marcelo further said the reporter who filed the story, Carlito Pablo, apologized to him for the erroneous reporting and that the latter told him the quote was not originally in the story he filed.

The following day, Dec. 8, the INQUIRER came out with a front-page article titled, "Bringing the house down: Marcelo lied" branding him a liar for denying he made that quote and that the reporter acknowledged his mistake.

The Dec. 8 rejoinder of the INQUIRER irked a reader who complained that the newspaper showed its bias against the "duly elected president of the republic (referring to Estrada) by rendering judgment on the credibility of an anti-Gloria witness even before all the testimonies have been heard."

Describing the published reaction as totally uncalled for, the reader said the INQUIRER "violated newspaper ethics when it played up a minor incident involving an important public figure and became a newsmaker instead of just being a messenger of the news that it should be."

I felt there was more to the Dec. 8 article than what was published. Constraints of space and time often prevent editors from putting everything in a news report. I asked around the editorial staff about the earlier interviews of Marcelo and the circumstances behind the news in dispute to enable me to make a fair evaluation of the reader's accusation of bias.

Marcelo's invitation

Until the PR person of Marcelo arranged an interview of his principal, all reports relating to the controversial businessman were based on telephone conversations with him by the reporters. Reasons of security were invoked to restrict personal contact with him.

After a flurry of telephone calls, a lunch meeting was scheduled on Nov. 17 at the Richmonde Hotel with the INQUIRER reporter and city editor in attendance. It is standard operating procedure for the newspaper to require the presence of an editor or senior member of the editorial staff whenever the person to be interviewed is high profile or controversial and is expected to come out with a bombshell on a hot issue.

The interview was held at the coffee shop of the hotel. Except for the presence of Marcelo's security personnel in civvies, there was nothing out of the ordinary in the place. There were other diners present. There was none of the secrecy or looking-behind-shoulders atmosphere during the interview.

For reasons he did not elaborate on, Marcelo refused the editor's request to have his picture taken or the interview recorded on tape. The interview was limited to asking questions and listening to his answers.

The editor recalled that Marcelo was very relaxed during their talk. He was a picture of self-confidence. He even made a sexually pejorative statement about President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that had the same impact as his "I will take down this entire house" boast.

That machismo-laced statement was not included in the Nov. 27 news report because the editor and reporter felt it smacked of gender prejudice and would demean the prestige of the highest office of the land.

The reporter did not take down notes during the interview. It was difficult to eat, ask questions, listen to Marcelo and write down his statements all at the same time. The editor simply sat and listened intently to Marcelo's account of his meeting with the President.

After the interview, the reporter and editor talked about the points taken up by Marcelo. The reporter immediately wrote in his notepad the more important parts of the interview. When the reporter filed his report on Marcelo, the editor verified the data it contained and endorsed its publication.

Evaluation

Like Marcelo's accusations against the President, it's the word of Marcelo against those of the INQUIRER reporter and city editor. Who's telling the truth? Had the interview been captured on tape, finding out who really said what or did not would have been a piece of cake.

Unfortunately, it was Marcelo himself who refused to have the interview recorded and so no physical evidence exists (outside of the notes of the reporter) that can unequivocally establish the truth behind his disclaimer of the controversial statement.

The Manual of Editorial Policies of the INQUIRER requires reporters and editors to comply with the "two-source rule" in the performance of their reporting tasks. The rule provides that every important fact in a story should be confirmed with at least two sources before it is reported. This rule assumes more significance if the information contains serious accusations or is derogatory to another person.

The exceptions to this rule are: if the informant's position gives importance and credibility to the information, such as a Cabinet member or Supreme Court justice; if there is supporting documentary evidence; if the news source speaks on something within his area of competence; or if the information is impeccable.

By analogy and effect, the rule was followed in the reporting of the Nov. 17 interview of Marcelo. Two sources—the reporter and editor—confirmed that Marcelo made the "I will take down this entire house" statement. It was something the two INQUIRER staff heard with their own ears, and not by way of information coming from a third party.

In other words, the Nov. 17 interview was in the nature of an "eyewitness" report. Unless it can be shown that the reporter and editor concerned fabricated the statement, their direct account represents the most reliable source of information about Marcelo's controversial boast against the Macapagal administration.

Notably, Marcelo did not deny that the Nov. 17 interview happened. The account of the reporter and editor about the time and place of the interview lend credence to the fact that Marcelo was indeed interviewed on that date. It is only the controversial statement that he denied.

All told, I think Marcelo really said the statement that was attributed to him. He may have been forced to disclaim it when asked about by Senator Magsaysay because it raised serious doubts about his true motivation in accusing the President of attempting to take over his company.

Did the INQUIRER cross the line when it came out with the Dec. 8 rejoinder and pointedly said Marcelo lied? Did it inexplicably transform itself from a news courier to a newsmaker?

To both questions, my reply is: No. The INQUIRER's integrity and credibility were placed on the line when Marcelo denied making the statement that made headlines and caught the public's attention.

I believe the INQUIRER was justified in defending itself from the accusation of fabrication. Had it kept quiet and let the accusation go unanswered, the damage to its reputation would have been irreparable.

Self-defense is the first and most important rule of nature.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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LETTERS

To give the President a legal forum

A FEW days ago, Belinda Olivares-Cunanan took me to task in her column for suggesting that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo give her rebuttal under oath to Pacifico Marcelo's allegations before the Senate blue ribbon committee.

I am sorry if my proposal has been misunderstood. I am not demanding that the President be compelled or even summoned to testify before the committee.

The whole idea was to provide the President with a legal forum to deny Marcelo's testimony that she had at the very least insinuated that she and some unnamed persons be given control of Marcelo's so-called clearing house corporation in a private conversation with him. No other person was present during their conversation, Marcelo said.

The issue now boils down to Marcelo's word against the President's.

As things now stand, Marcelo appears to have the edge for the simple reason that he has testified under oath before the blue ribbon committee while the President's defenders have, thus far, only been content with issuing press denials. Press denials are not of equal evidentiary value as testimonial denials.

Hence, it is to her advantage that she gives testimony under oath before the blue ribbon committee. As minority leader of the Senate, I wish to give further assurance that she won't be subjected to disrespect, abuse or harassment by the members of the minority bloc.—**SEN. AQUILINO PIMENTEL, Office of the Minority Leader, 6th Floor, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City 1308**

Is Army harassing Good Shepherd nun?

A NEWS item last Dec. 12 showed a photo and report about a group of lumad rallyists branding one of our sisters, Sr. Mary John Dumaog, as a communist and petitioning for the retention of the Army.

Sister Dumaog and our Good Shepherd sisters in Kalilid have been working for the lumads in Kalilid, Agusan del Sur since 1978. The programs they have established for the lumads—socio-economic, health, graded literacy, protection of ancestral domain, relief and rehabilitation—are aimed at empowering the lumads, enabling them to protect their culture and helping them become self-reliant.

Over the years, the experience of the sisters and lumads with the military has been that of harassment and other violations of human rights. The most recent was the rally against Sister Dumaog, branding her as a communist.

We, the Good Shepherd Sisters of the Philippine Province, protest the military's harassment of Sister Dumaog and the lumads of Barangay Balit.

We wish to remind them of their sworn duty as stated in our Constitution, to be protectors of our people and our nation.—**SR. LYDIA C. EBORA, RGS, provincial superior, Philippine Province of the Good Shepherd, 1043 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City**

Joker's official campaign manager

ELFREN S. Cruz was the official campaign manager of Sen. Joker P. Arroyo in the May 2001 elections, not other persons who have been constantly and mistakenly referred to in media and Senate hearings in connection with the controversy regarding the alleged misuse of Philippine Charity and Sweepstakes Office funds.

My association with the senator dates back to the Aquino administration when I worked closely with Arroyo during his tenure as President Cory Aquino's executive secretary. I was then chief of the Presidential Management Staff and also served as Metro Manila governor.

When Arroyo announced that he was planning to run for the Senate, a group of his former close associates in government and I decided to form a volunteer group to help in his campaign. However, a week or so before the start of the campaign season, Arroyo invited me to meet with him at the Hotel Intercontinental where he asked me to be his campaign manager. I immediately accepted not only because of our close association but because I sincerely felt that this was a man that the country needed to have in the Senate. I have always admired Arroyo's integrity, courage and wisdom.

During that period I was no longer active in politics although I had been an active member and officer of the PDP-Laban since 1984. I had been involved as a volunteer in the campaigns of people whom I have admired and respected like Cory Aquino, Jaime Ferrer and Nene Pimentel.

During the campaign for Arroyo, our foremost campaign problem was always the lack of funds. In fact, many people, including former President Aquino, kept asking why Arroyo had very few posters. However, the limited campaign budget was compensated for by the fact that we had so many people who volunteered their services for free. Even the campaign headquarters was opened only midway in the campaign when we finally found an Arroyo supporter who gave it to us rent-free.

This statement should once and for all end the erroneous information coming out in the media on the matter —**ELFREN S. CRUZ, cruzes@info.com.ph**

Martial law type of harassments in Agusan del Sur

THIS has reference to the story titled, "Let Army stay, Agusan folk urge" (PDI, 12/12/01) by Ma. Kristina Cassion, about the rally and press conference led by Army soldiers who justified the military presence at the government center in Barangay Balit, Agusan del Sur.

We, members of the Promotion of Church People's Response National Executive Committee and National Council, strongly denounce the military's claim that the petition for immediate pull-out of soldiers was merely initiated by Sr. Mary John Dumaog of the Philippine Province of the Good Shepherd. We hail the earlier efforts of civilians and residents to protest and demand the pull-out of Army soldiers who disrupted civilian functions and clearly violated the Local Government Code prohibiting military occupation of government buildings.

We strongly suspect that the military coerced some local residents to join the march-rally to express support for their continued stay in the barangay. We sound the alarm over the harassment and intimidation against human rights workers, including Church leaders like Fr. Arman Onion, Msgr. Victorino Rivas, Fr. Romeo Empestan and Fr. Baby Goroncillo, who are now branded "communists" for protesting human rights abuses perpetrated by the police, military and paramilitary forces. The communist-branding of Church people who have joined protests against widespread human rights abuses and military atrocities is pure intimidation and martial law-type harassment.

Sister Dumaog is a member of the PCPR National Council and is well known for being a dedicated peace and human rights worker. Sister Dumaog embraces the PCPR mission to serve the vision of a church that makes alive its prophetic heritage of justice, freedom and truth.

In truth, the petition was launched by the united officials and residents of Barangay Balit who believe that their community is no place for abusive soldiers to stay in. It is pure intimidation of the military to accuse Sister Dumaog as the "brains" of the Communist Party of the Philippines just because she sided with the people and supported their petition.

It is outrageous that human rights workers such as Nicanor de los Santos, a Dumagat leader from Quezon, was killed on Human Rights Day. We are more outraged that Church people like Sister Dumaog are also victims of grave military intimidation. If Sister Dumaog happened to be like a Dumagat, it seemed that the soldiers in Agusan were ready to kill her.

We urge the people to be critical and not to be deceived into joining rallies that attempt to justify military presence in civilian communities. We also challenge the media to probe deeper and help expose the human rights abuses especially in the highly militarized areas like Agusan, Mindoro and many other affected regions.—**BISHOP ALAN RAY SARTE, co-chair; ROBERT DE CASTRO, secretary-general; AMIE DURAL, deputy secretary; FR. BENJAMIN ALFORQUE, council member at large; SR. CHIT VALERIO, RVM, treasurer; REV. RAY GELLOAGAN, co-chair, NCR, Promotion of Church People's Response, 3rd Floor, NCCP Bldg., 879 Edsa, Quezon City**

Appropriate treatment for Estrada

OMBRA Tamano, perhaps still recovering from a crushing defeat as a Puwersa ng Masa senatorial candidate in the last elections, misappropriates the valued Filipino custom of filial piety and respect for elders in a fantastic attempt to demand "respect" for ousted President Joseph Estrada. He even goes on to imply that the treatment Estrada is getting is un-Filipino and undemocratic.

At the outset, it is important to stress that if there is anyone who has no respect for the public or for democracy, it would be Estrada et al. Since being ousted from power, Estrada et al. have refused to recognize People Power II, dragged the trial through more than 100 motions, harassed the judge until exhaustion and frustrated all attempts to make them defend themselves in a court of law. They even launched a failed comeback attempt which made cannon fodder out of Estrada's many fans.

Tamano's concept of respect includes asking why there is opposition to Estrada's plea to seek medical treatment in the United States and thanking authorities for the permit given Estrada and his co-accused Jinggoy to attend the wake of a popular actress.

Our failure to deal in a more appropriate fashion with those accused of plunder, a heinous and non-bailable crime, would inspire new Estradas to continue with impunity and make us the world's laughingstock. Worse, we would be laughed at twice over for pampering rather than prosecuting both Marcos and Estrada who shared the similar fate of being ousted from power through people power.

A physician himself, Tamano should be among the first to know that Filipino doctors, including ophthalmologists and orthopedic surgeons, are more than competent to attend to Estrada's many illnesses caused by his flamboyant lifestyle. Incidentally, contrary to the grim and ignorant scenarios painted by his defense lawyers if Estrada is not allowed medical treatment in the United States, the ex-leader will soon have a cataract-extraction surgery in a Philippine eye center.

While Estrada's desire to seek medical attention abroad insults our doctors, the entire episode puts to question Estrada's respect for and the Sandiganbayan's strict enforcement of the Plunder Law under which he is charged.

Tamano even goes to the extent of asking us to take giant steps backward 'to a time when the people were rendered ignorant of their rights to criticize public officials and support even their most indefensible acts in office. What is so democratic about this?

If we were to follow Tamano's line, we would not have ousted Marcos and Estrada even if the plunder, puppetry and fascism have become intolerable.

But unlike Estrada and Tamano, the Filipino people know better. We launched two people power uprisings against a tyrant and a plunderer. These are signs of our people's growing political maturity, a developing vigilant citizenry who won't take plunder sitting down but will break free of the feudalistic silence in the face of official abuse.

Unfortunately, some people like Estrada and Tamano would rather have nothing of this and would consign us to a culture with no self-respect and with a special caste for leaders who commit high crimes such as plunder.—**FR. JOE DIZON, spokesperson, Plunder Watch, 23 Maamo Street, Sikatuna Village, Quezon City 1101**

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US now backs retaliation on Indian parliament attackers

NEWS ANALYSIS

Shaun Tandon

NEW DELHI—The United States, which has long urged restraint between South Asian nuclear powers India and Pakistan, appears to have shifted course after a bloody attack on India's parliament by backing a furious New Delhi's right to a response.

Analysts said the apparent change in Washington's stance was being closely monitored by the Indian government, which has blamed Pakistan-based Islamic militants for the attack Thursday that left 12 people dead at the country's seat of power.

While Washington has in recent months apprehensively watched growing tension between India and Pakistan—unlikely partners in the US-led "war on terrorism"—such concerns have been largely erased by the perceived success of the US campaign in Afghanistan, analysts said.

"It would surely be very awkward for American diplomats to be urging restraint at this point," said Uday Bhaskar, deputy director of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses in New Delhi.

"Indian officials must be thinking, 'You can do it in Afghanistan, why can't we do it in this case? Lashkar has been making threats on the prime minister's life,'" Bhaskar said.

Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, Pakistan-based movements battling Indian rule in Kashmir, are accused by New Delhi of involvement in the parliament attack. India has demanded that Pakistan crack down on the groups, including arresting their leaders.

The militant groups have denied involvement in the assault and the Pakistani government, while condemning the attack, has demanded that India present evidence to prove the movements' involvement.

"Having covered considerable ground in Afghanistan since Sept. 11, is Washington now ready to face up to the challenge of terrorism emanating from Pakistan? That is the big question underlying India's latest diplomatic drive," wrote C. Raja Mohan, an analyst for The Hindu newspaper.

US President George W. Bush telephoned Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Thursday to condemn the attack and offer the assistance of the FBI and State Department counter-terrorist teams, according to the White House.

US Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill said the attack "was no different in its objective from the terror attacks in the United States on Sept. 11" and was "a vivid demonstration that the United States and India were together in their global struggle against terrorism."

State Department Richard Boucher said that while it would be "premature" to comment on an Indian reaction to the attack, "We think they (Indian officials) will try to...find out who was responsible for these horrible acts and take appropriate action on that."

The comments were a far cry from US calls for restraint after an Oct. 1 attack killed 38 people, most of them civilians, at Indian Kashmir's state legislature in Srinagar.

"I think the bottom line is that there is an interesting type of nuance (in Washington's stance) for what it does not say," Bhaskar said.

The change in US position is similar to Washington's new posture in the Middle East, where after months of urging mutual restraint it has defended Israel's tough reprisals against Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority as "self-defense," following a spate of suicide bombings that left more than two dozen Israelis dead.

But, Bhaskar noted, one difference is crucial: in the Middle East, the United States does not have to worry about the conflict spiraling into war between nuclear powers.

In light of such fears, Bhaskar noted that India seemed to be relying first on international diplomacy to force Pakistan to crack down on militants.

However, more hawkish members of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Hindu-nationalist BJP party have urged that forces be sent across the disputed Kashmir border to clamp down on the Muslim guerrillas.

The hard-line approach may also please a public that sees the United States as ignoring Indian concerns about terrorism.

A letter-writer to The Indian Express said: "We should be like the Americans, who...gave their wholehearted support to the US government to deal with the terrorists. It was this that empowered the Bush administration to crush the enemy's citadel, miles and miles away."

Bhaskar said that if Vajpayee chooses the more hawkish approach, Indian officials would likely hold "very quiet consultations" with their US counterparts explaining that the action would be "a very swift operation that targets terrorist camps."

Another option, wrote Mohan, is that "if the United States is really worried about a 'nuclear flashpoint' in the subcontinent, it would be reasonable to argue that Washington exert the maximum pressure possible on Islamabad to dismantle the infrastructure for terrorism in Pakistan." ***AFP***

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The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Bomb-London terror plan discovered

LONDON—Plans for a major bomb attack on London have been discovered in a terrorist base in Afghanistan, British newspapers reported Sunday.

The Observer said it had seen the blueprint for an attack in a notebook discovered at an al-Qaida training camp in the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar.

A note suggested that the intended target was Moorgate in the center of London's financial district.

But there was no indication whether the person who drew up the plan stayed to fight and die with alleged terror mastermind Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, or whether he had already left on his mission to Britain before the suicide hijackings of Sept. 11, the Observer said.

A Scotland Yard source told the newspaper that the discovery in Kandahar would be investigated by anti-terrorist officers. "We have to recognize that there are some very big targets in the City of London," the source said.

Written in clear English, the language suggested that the author was a British fundamentalist who prepared the document while training at the camp in the Sheragha Jama district of Kandahar, the newspaper added.

The Independent on Sunday said it had seen detailed notes found in a Kandahar terrorist "safe house" for an al-Qaida plan to explode a huge car bomb in the Moorgate area, to be detonated by remote control.

The plans were accompanied by instructions on how to assemble the bomb and get it in position in a van, and how to explode it.

They were found by Daniel do Rosario, a journalist for the Portuguese newspaper Expresso, the Independent on Sunday said.

Meanwhile, the Observer reported that ministers had been warned that a determined terrorist attempt to fly an aeroplane into the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant in northwest England could not be prevented because of its proximity to transatlantic flight paths.

More than 200 flights a day pass within 80 km of the plant.

Environmental groups have repeatedly complained about a possible terrorist threat to Sellafield. *AFP*

AN INDONESIAN Muslim child sits amid praying Muslim women at the Sunda Kelapa port in Jakarta, Dec. 16 as Muslims mark the end of Ramadan. The US-led anti-terror coalition has waged its war against Taliban and al-Qaida fighters even during Muslims' holy month.
AFP

Australia to place armed marshals on domestic flights

SYDNEY—Armed sky marshals will be placed on domestic flights in time for the Christmas travel rush, the Australian government said Sunday.

Attorney General Daryl Williams said a range of counter-terrorism measures would be approved soon.

A law specifically relating to the act of terrorism would be introduced, carrying a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, and the Crimes Act would be amended to allow terrorist assets to be seized.

Williams said a related offence of preparing or planning terrorist attacks would also be introduced when parliament resumes next February.

"As a result of a high-level review of Australia's counter-terrorism arrangements, recommendations to further strengthen these arrangements are currently before cabinet and will be announced shortly," he said in a statement.

Earlier Sunday an airport workers union claimed passengers were at risk in Australia because the government had failed to address security issues since Sept. 11.

The Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union launched a nationwide protest by handing out bogus boarding passes at Sydney Airport's Qantas domestic terminal, alerting passengers to what it called a security crisis.

Union national secretary Jeff Lawrence said Australia lagged behind the United States and Canada in terms of measures implemented since the Sept. 11 attacks.

He said there was virtually no screening taking place at regional airports.

"Australian passengers are much less safe than in comparable countries around the world," he said.

"Despite the events of Sept. 11, the Australian government has taken very little action to improve airport security," he added. *AP*

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18 disabled die in fire in Italy

ROME—Fire swept through a rehabilitation home for the elderly and disabled in southern Italy early Sunday, killing at least 18 people, many as they slept, officials said.

At least nine people survived the fast-moving blaze, which completely destroyed the prefabricated center, located in the countryside near the coast of Salerno, about three kilometers from the town of Buccino in San Gregorio Magno.

Italian news reports initially put the number of dead at 21. But Lt. Col. Gilberto Murgia of the Salerno carabinieri paramilitary police told reporters at the scene that the toll was 18: 10 men and eight women. The toll was revised after firefighters searched the wreckage, the ANSA news agency said.

A spokesperson at the Salerno provincial fire department, which was coordinating the emergency effort, confirmed 18 bodies had been discovered and said one person remained unaccounted for.

Many of the dead, including elderly people with physical and mental disabilities, were found in their beds and apparently suffocated from the smoke, said Nicola Parisi, mayor of Buccino.

"We searched the scene and we saw the burned bodies," he said in a telephone interview after visiting the wreckage, which was still smoldering hours after the blaze was brought under control.

"The fire broke out after midnight, so the people were sleeping," Parisi said.

There was no immediate cause, but one of the hypotheses being considered was that the blaze was sparked by a shorted electrical circuit, Parisi said.

He said firefighters had only recovered 10 bodies several hours after the fire broke out. Officials said the intensity of the blaze and smoke, as well as the rain and strong winds blowing, had made recovery efforts difficult.

"Unfortunately, the flames spread very quickly, and because of that, there was nothing to do for these poor people," said the vice mayor of Buccino, Pasquale Via.

The residence, made up of a few prefabricated block units, had been donated to Italy by France after a 1980 earthquake rocked the region, Parisi said. *AP*

OPEN AGAIN AFTER 11 YEARS AFP

Honor guards in historical costumes pass by the Leaning Tower of Pisa Dec. 15, on its official re-opening to the public, ending 11 years of closure for restoration after engineers judged it too fragile and unstable. For most of the past decade, the 54.5-meter tall marble monument was girdled in steel and anchored by a pair of slender steel "suspenders" running across the surrounding square. By using hundreds of tons of lead counterweights at the base and extracting soil from under the foundation, engineers shaved 44 centimeters off the lean and guided the tower back to where it was in 1838.

SUICIDE ATTACK

Pakistan warns India: Action will beget force

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on Saturday threatened to retaliate with force if arch-rival India took any "precipitous action" after accusing a Pakistan-based guerrilla group of being behind this week's attack on parliament in New Delhi.

But he promised to take action against any Pakistan group if its involvement in this "terrorist act" was proved.

India called on Pakistan on Saturday to respond within days to a demand it close down two Pakistan-based Kashmiri separatist groups it blamed for a string of attacks culminating in Thursday's assault on parliament in which 12 people, including the five attackers, were killed.

General Musharraf complained of a "degree of rhetoric developing from India" over the issue and said "any adventure (against Pakistan) would be met with force."

"I would like to condemn... in the strongest terms this terrorist act against Indian parliament," he said on state television. "We are against any such terrorist acts anywhere in the world."

Musharraf warned New Delhi against any "precipitous action by the Indian government against Pakistan. This would lead to very serious repercussions. It must not be done."

India has singled out the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed groups in an ultimatum which, if rejected, could push the nuclear-powered neighbors that have fought three wars since independence in 1947 to renewed confrontation.

Both these groups and an alliance of other guerrilla groups fighting Indian rule in Kashmir have denied any role in the attack.

"India will wait for a few days to know what kind of reaction comes from Pakistan," Home (interior) Minister L.K. Advani told reporters in the western city of Ahmedabad before Musharraf made his comments.

It was the first time India had given a timeframe for its demand that Pakistan close the groups, which have denied any part in the attack.

Musharraf, who swept to power in a bloodless coup in 1999, said he would cooperate in trying to find out who was responsible for the attack as long as there was evidence against any individual or group in Pakistan.

Musharraf said Pakistan would not allow its territory to be used "for any such terrorist acts anywhere in the world and... that includes India."

But he said: "We would surely expect proof and evidence of involvement of any groups in Pakistan in terrorist acts. We will take action against anybody involved in Pakistan in these acts if at all proved."

He said evidence cited by India so far was "not adequate at the moment" and there were indications of a possible Indian "design behind this operation."

"So we would like to be very sure with evidence, with concrete evidence, that this is not the case... and if at all anyone has been involved from Pakistan we would like to move against them."

Five people armed with guns, grenades and bombs stormed the parliament complex in New Delhi, killing seven people before they were killed themselves.

Pakistan swiftly condemned the attack and Musharraf sent a message of sympathy to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Both leaders are due to meet on the sidelines of a Jan. 4-6 summit of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in the Nepali capital Kathmandu.

Musharraf has been in the spotlight since the Sept. 11 attacks, before which his country supported neighboring Afghanistan's fundamentalist Taliban leaders.

But he has voiced full support for Washington's war on terrorism, which US President George Bush has waged to hunt down Afghan-based militant Osama bin Laden, the prime suspect in the September attacks.

Lashkar and Jaish are among more than a dozen guerrilla groups fighting India's rule over about 45 percent of Kashmir and Jaish is believed to have had contacts with bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

Pakistan controls a little more than a third of the former princely state, over which the two countries have fought two of their three wars since their independence from Britain in 1947.

China holds the rest of the territory.

Jaish initially claimed responsibility for an attack on the state parliament building in Indian Kashmir in October. But the next day, after condemnation by much of the world, including Pakistan, the group denied any involvement. *Reuters*

Israeli choppers fire rockets at Gaza targets

JERUSALEM—Israeli helicopters rocketed Palestinian security targets in northern Gaza Strip on Sunday, as fresh violence rumbled on after the end of a US peace mission and ushered in the start of the Muslim Eid al-Fitr holiday.

Palestinian police said two attack helicopters fired four missiles at a Palestinian police station and preventive security office in Jabaliya refugee camp. There were no injuries.

The Israeli army said the strikes were in response to a Palestinian mortar attack on one of its army posts.

"Despite the Israeli demand to stop the mortar shelling, it continued during the evening with two shells fired at a base in the Gaza Strip," an army statement said. "In response the IDF (army) struck the Palestinian police headquarters in Jabaliya."

The shelling and helicopter raid followed a week of bloody tit-for-tat attacks in which Palestinian militants killed 10 Israelis in a bus ambush in response to Israeli killings of Palestinians, and Israel retaliated with F-16 air raids.

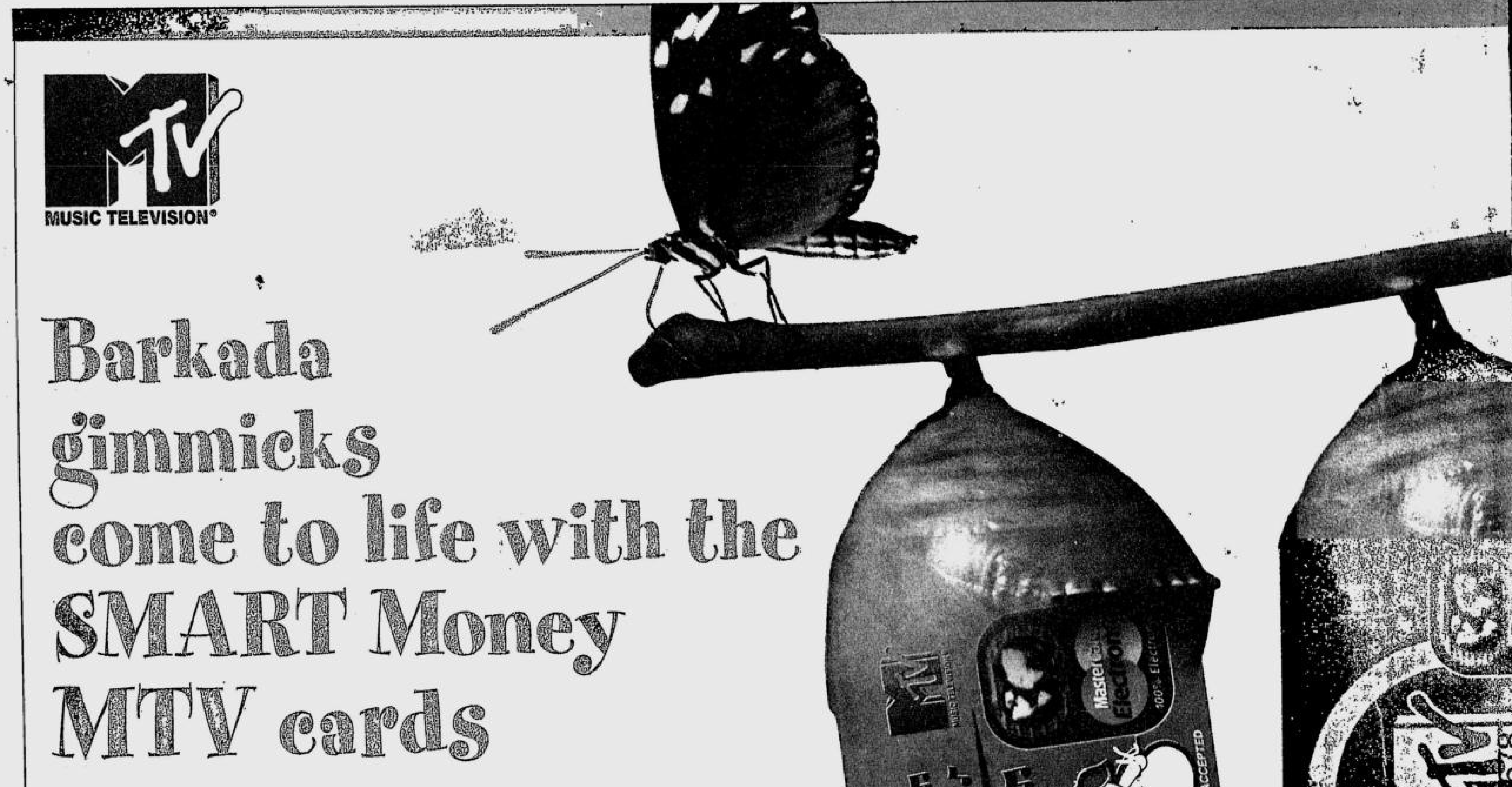
The escalating violence, some of the most intense in an uprising in which more than 1,000 people have died, has derailed a peace mission by US envoy Anthony Zinni—the first intensive Middle East peace effort by President George W. Bush.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has come under intense Israeli and US pressure to clamp down on the organizations that have killed scores of Israelis in a wave of suicide attacks in recent months.

Arafat decided after the ambush last week to shut offices of militant groups. On Sunday, more than 13 institutions tied to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, including political offices, newspapers, clubs and charities, were sealed.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government, meanwhile, has dismissed Arafat as "irrelevant."

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip mark the start of celebrations for the Eid al-Fitr feast a day after Israeli troops shot dead four Palestinians in an Israeli tank raid on Palestinian-ruled areas in northern Gaza Strip. *Reuters*



EU summit launches reform vision

ANTI-GLOBALIZATION protesters wave their flags during demonstrations in Brussels Dec. 14. They are part of some 15,000 activists who staged protests as the European Union Ministers held their end-of-the-year summit at the Royal Castle of Laeken in Belgium. AFP

BRUSSELS—A European Union summit launched an ambitious project to reshape the bloc for the 21st century on Saturday but ended in acrimony when leaders failed to agree on how to share out a dozen new EU agencies.

Wrapping up a two-day summit, the 15 leaders took the unprecedented step of agreeing on a political Convention to chart the future course of the union, adopting the grand-sounding Laeken Declaration on the Future of Europe.

The Convention, due to start work in March, will draw up proposals for reforms to make the EU operate more smoothly and effectively as it prepares to welcome up to a dozen new members—mostly former Communist countries of central and eastern Europe—in the next few years.

As the leaders deliberated in the sumptuous surroundings of Brussels' Laeken palace, anti-capitalist protesters hurled Molotov cocktails at police and vandalized buildings and cars during a march in the city center.

Police said about 70 people were arrested, 10 of them for possessing weapons.

The EU leaders named veteran former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing to chair the Convention which could bring far-reaching changes to the way the EU works, perhaps even setting the bloc on the road towards its own constitution.

But they showed no such grand vision when it came to deciding which EU countries would host a dozen new EU bodies, including a food safety agency and maritime safety agency.

The summit became bogged down in the petty politics and horse-trading which have given the EU a bad name, finally ending in disarray as leaders squabbled over which country should get its own agency, considered one of the perks of EU membership.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi lost his temper in an angry finale, rejecting a package deal offered by the Belgian EU presidency because he insisted Parma in Italy, not Helsinki, must get the seat of the food safety agency.

"I said a strong 'No.' I even had to raise my voice. I ran into a tough hurdle but I did not give up," he told reporters.

France insisted on winning the maritime security agency for Nantes on its Atlantic seaboard, rejecting a Belgian compromise proposal that would have given this agency to Lisbon.

French President Jacques Chirac complained that the Belgians had tried to please everyone with "an inflation of agencies... a whole series of seats of agencies that don't really exist or might eventually be created but haven't yet undergone the necessary studies."

The issue will now be left for Spain to sort out when it takes over the EU presidency in January.

It was the second gaffe in two days. Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel triumphantly announced on Friday that the 15-nation bloc had decided to create its first multinational force to police Afghanistan once US-led military action ends. *Reuters*

Antarctic cleanup begins

HOBART, Australia—Officials began an ambitious project Sunday to tackle Antarctic pollution, launching a cleanup of the continent's contaminated waste sites.

Fifty containers designed to carry and confine rubbish from Antarctic research station garbage dumps set sail for Casey station from Hobart, on the island state of Tasmania.

Human impacts researcher Ian Snape told an Antarctic waste management seminar late last week that waste disposal in the sensitive polar environment had stopped but past practices were a pressing concern.

"Many stations in Antarctica now have large abandoned waste disposal sites, some of which extend into the marine environment," Snape said. "Unfortunately the types of materials that were disposed of in this way are sources of contamination that are persistent in the environment."

Pre-1980s disposal methods of research-base waste, such as rubbish dumps, water dumping and open burning, have left a legacy of polluted sites in the mostly pristine Antarctic.

An agreement forged in 1998 committed all countries working in the Antarctic to remove all newly generated waste and old waste unless the action of transporting it caused more environmental damage.

Contamination and leaching has made the volume of garbage to be removed is far greater than the amount of material originally taken to Antarctica.

Snape said the containers will be filled with rubbish from the dump at Casey station over the next two years. Work will be done slowly to ensure contaminants are not released into nearby seas when the site is disturbed.

"It is difficult to dig frozen ground or predict where water channels will develop as the snow melts," Snape said.

Scientists will also use the delicate operation to investigate contaminant dispersal, biological impacts and cleanup methods for the area's dumps, ahead of an even larger cleanup planned for 2002-2003. *AP*

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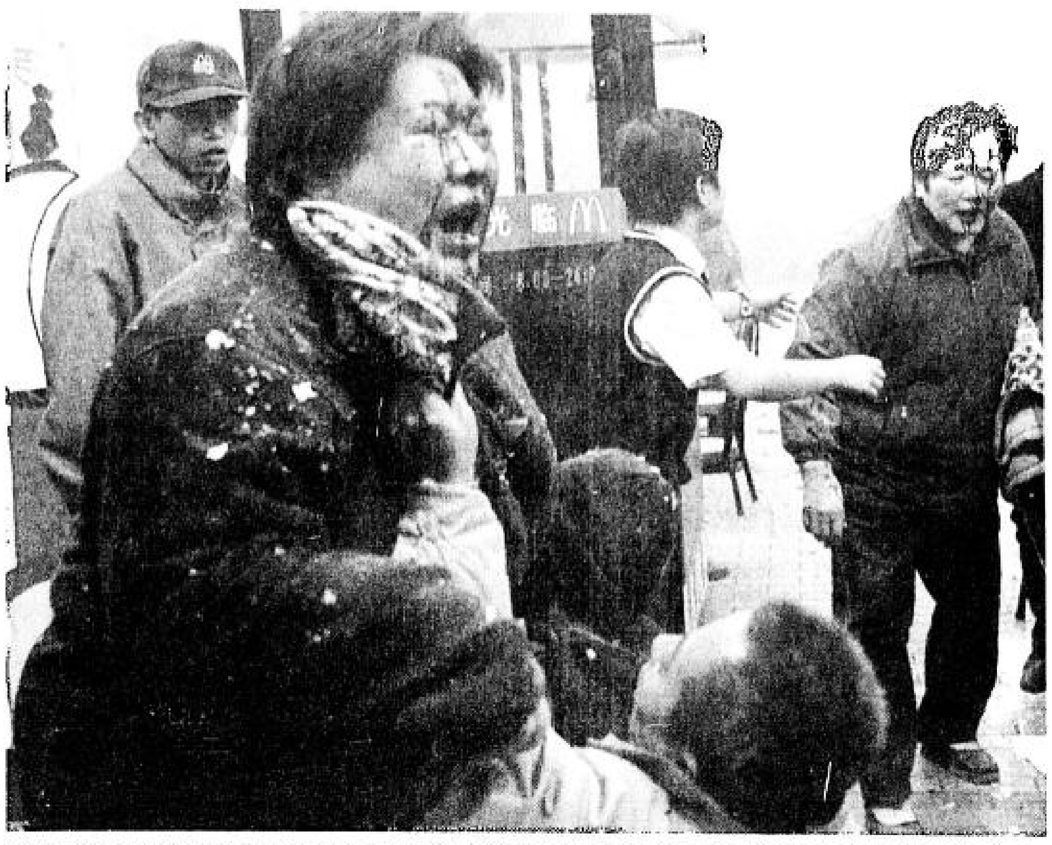


INJURED customers escape from a McDonald's restaurant after a bomb explosion during the busy dinner hour in China's western city of Xian Dec. 15, killing at least one person and injuring as many as 30 people.
REUTERS

China: 24 blasts in 3 cities in just 2 days

BEIJING—China on Sunday was probing 24 explosions which rocked three cities in just two days, with 20 bombs exploding in one city and elsewhere a blast ripping through a McDonald's restaurant during the crowded dinner hour.

The bomb at a McDonald's fast food restaurant in Xian, the provincial capital of northern Shaanxi province, happened at about 6:30 p.m. local time Saturday when the restaurant was full of diners, the official Xinhua news agency said.

One man was killed in the blast and 28 injured, with two hurt seriously, the report said, adding that police were treating the blast as suspicious.

A local journalist said the blast appeared to be a suicide bombing, but it was unclear if the man who died was the perpetrator.

The blast followed 23 explosions that killed five and injured seven in two cities in southern Guangdong province early Friday. Police Sunday said the blasts were the work of a local businessman who had targeted his in-laws and people with whom he had economic and debt disputes.

Twenty of the explosions happened in Zhanjiang city, where the suspect, Lin Guojian, lived. Lin blew himself up in a suicide explosion, the Xinhua news agency quoted police as saying.

The other three explosions happened at nearby Jiangmen city, where Lin was born.

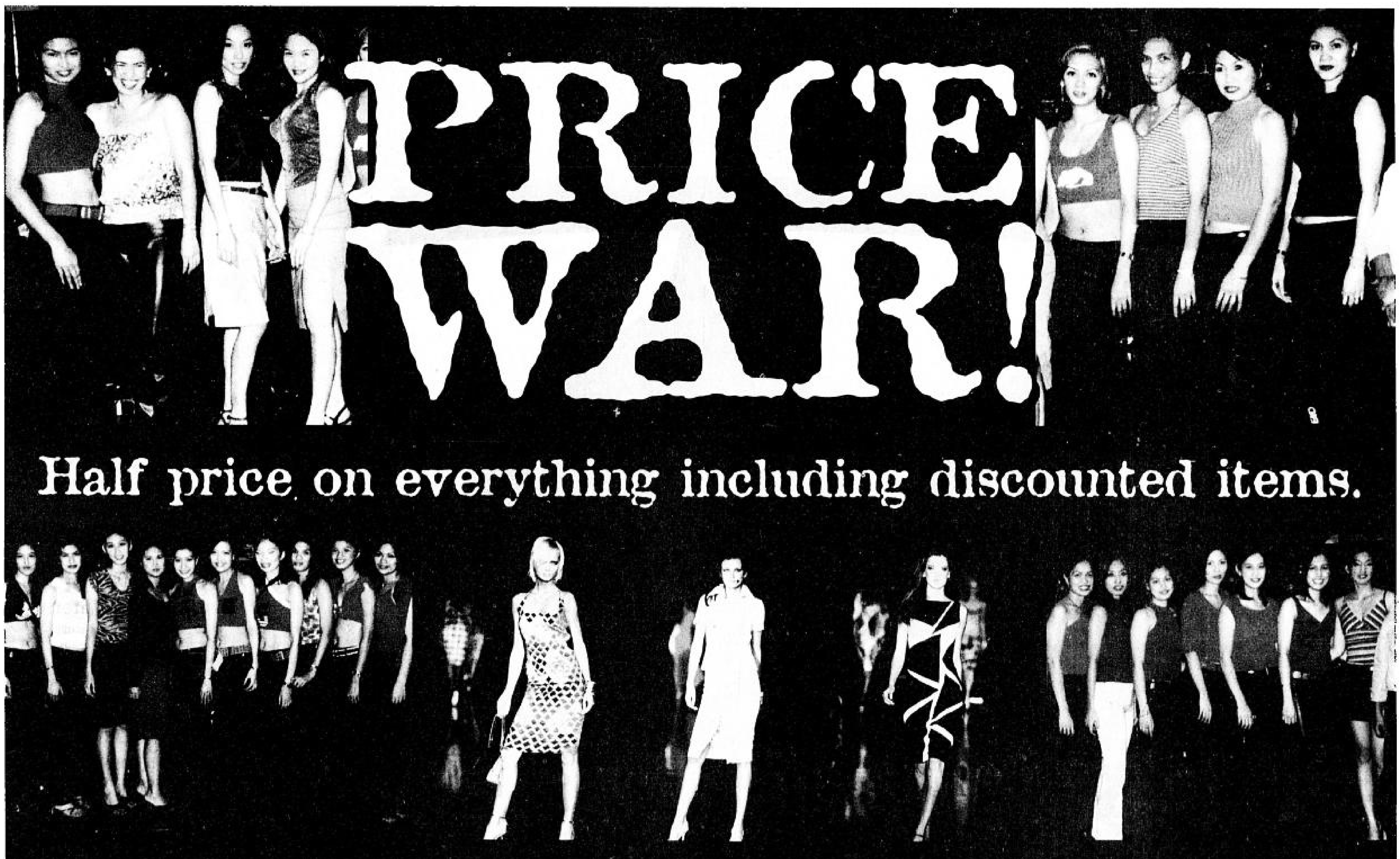
They went off at approximately the same time, between 4:50 a.m. local time and 5:15 a.m., with 20 bombs exploding in a 10-minute period, the People's Daily website and Yangcheng Evening News said.

"Lin was greatly irritated by Wang Qixin, his former brother-in-law who had divorced his sister, and wanted to take revenge," Xinhua said.

"In addition, Lin also placed explosives to attack other households having debt conflicts or other economic problems with him."

The former chemical vendor, goldsmith and loan shark had bought books on how to make bombs, as well as explosives and equipment, a month ago and had taught himself how to create explosions, Xinhua and other media said.

Lin used his mobile phone and beepers to explode at least some of the bombs, according to the Nanfang Daily website. *AFP*



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ANSWER TO SECESSION

Gloria urged to study federalism

BAGUIO CITY—Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. on Friday advised President Macapagal-Arroyo to "neutralize" the resurrected Moro insurgency by jailing or exiling Nur Misuari.

He said Misuari, erstwhile governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, could be barred from the country in the same manner former President Corazon Aquino stopped the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos from returning after the 1986 Edsa Revolt.

But he said Ms Macapagal's best option was still to accept the relevance in the 21st century of a federalized Philippine Republic, to finally quell the Mindanao crisis.

In effect, Pimentel is asking Malacañang to reconsider its stand on controversial Charter changes, for new long-term policies that would assuage secessionist sentiments being fueled by Misuari's rebellion last month.

He said federalism could be "a solution to the Mindanao crisis" once the government convenes a Constitutional Convention and draft a radically new Constitution for 21st century Filipino politics.

Pimentel described Misuari, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) strongman Salamat Hashim, and an array of Bangsamoro rebel leaders from as far back as the 1900s, as "symptoms" of the government's century-old obsession to "assimilate" indigenous peoples into mainstream Filipino society.

The senator spoke before the Cordillera conference on federalism here, where he offered pleas for support for federalism from Cordillera communities that had rejected two organic acts for a Cordillera autonomous region.

Under the 1987 Constitution, Muslim Mindanao and Cordillera are granted autonomy. But only Misuari managed to develop the ARMM after he signed a peace agreement with the government.

Pimentel stressed that even these autonomy provisions appeared to have failed, as exemplified by Salamat's continuing secessionist movement, and by Misuari's rebellion in November.

"ARMM is working but only up to a point . . . If autonomy was successful, then Salamat and Misuari would not be calling for secession, would they?" he posed the question to an audience composed of mayors, line agency employees and members of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army.

"Misuari, like his contemporary in Cordillera rebellion, (slain rebel priest and CPLA founder) Conrado Balweg, had been reacting to the state's open aggression against fringe cultures that refuse 'Manila-centric' governance," Pimentel said.

"(Malacañang) does not know (how to address Misuari's fate in Malaysia), because they do not have any over-all concept to deal with the Moro uprising in Mindanao. My suggestion is to adopt a policy that will neutralize Misuari. By neutralize I mean render him ineffective," he said.

"As he can put him in prison or exile him, (and not) allow him back to the Philippines. Like Cory (Aquino) never allowed Marcos to come back. Or Marcos never allowed Ninoy (Aquino) to come back."

But Pimentel said Malacañang's "Misuari solution" would merely repeat a colonial government instrument used to quell similar uprisings in 1521 when the Spanish government attacked Moro outposts to impose sanctions against erring Moro communities. *Vincent Cabreza and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cordillera tries new bid for federalism

BAGUIO CITY—After being trounced in two successive plebiscites in the 1990s, Cordillera autonomy tries on a new tack: Opting for a federalist form of government.

Councilor Edilberto Tenefrancia, who insisted that he is not campaigning for federalism, said the Cordillera autonomous region is similar to a federalist form of government, which is a sovereign state formed by the political union of several states.

As in an autonomous region, a region under a federalist government gives certain powers to the central government while retaining control of local affairs, he said.

Tenefrancia also said during the campaign for Cordillera autonomy in 1997, some people had said that if autonomy is good for the Cordillera, then it must be good for Bicol, Ilocos and other regions.

Baguio held on Friday the first of a series of consultations on the federalist option.

The campaign for federalism was first given serious matter as a response to the Mindanao conflict. The Senate is examining federalism as an option to resolve provincial disparities.

The proposal by political scientist and former University of the Philippines president Jose Abueva is for a two-stage transformation from the decentralized unitary system to a federal system by 2010.

Abueva proposed a separate region for Cordillera and Muslim Mindanao, as envisioned in the 1987 Constitution.

A proposal by Dr. Gaudioso Sosmeña, executive director of the Local Government Development Foundation, groups Cordillera with Ilocos and Cagayan Valley.

Other regions proposed by Sosmeña are Central Luzon, including parts of Metro Manila; Southern Luzon, also including parts of Metro Manila; the Visayas, Bangsamoro state, composed of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Northern Mindanao and Southern Mindanao.

Prof. Michael Mastura, a federalist expert, said federalism would relocate power from the central to the peripheral area of government.

Mastura also asked for a federalist government that will recognize Cordillera and Bangsamoro state rights over ancestral domains but residuary authority is left to the central government over territorial borders.

He also suggested the reorganization of Metro Manila and the administration regions into states on the basis of geography, historic borders, and ethnic, linguistic and cultural ties. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

GMA renews call for unity, end to divisiveness

BY TONETTE OREJAS
AND ANSELMO ROQUE
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MAGALANG, Pampanga—President Macapagal-Arroyo called anew Thursday for a stop to partisan politics to ensure unity and peace and development in the country.

"*Lahat tayo, sana tigilan muna natin ang pag-aaway-away. Tigilan muna ang pamumulitika. Magtrabaho tayo, magsama-sama tayo para sa kinabukasan ng ating bansa*," the President told 2,000 war veterans here.

She made the same call in an earlier speech during the first anniversary celebration of the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija.

Her wish list includes seeing communist rebels join the fold of society like did anti-Japanese fighters belonging to the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap).

"*Sana yung mga nasa bundok ay bumaba na rin at pumasok sa ating lipunan*," she told the Hukbalahap veterans, led by their leader Luis Taruc, who gathered for the 138th year anniversary of this town to give support to her administration.

Projects

She arrived here at 2:05 p.m., after visiting Ilocos Sur, Abra, La Union and Nueva Ecija in the morning to inaugurate various projects in those areas.

In Magalang, Ms Macapagal emphasized the need to end the division in the country, warning that without unity, the country might not withstand the effects of the global economic recession next year.

Speaking this time in her native Kapampangan, the President said the "people's love" for her has strengthened her resolve to lead the country in overcoming many problems.

"I have much to thank you. Like a President of a difficult time you did not give up on me. Instead you showed me support, help and love that knows no comparison," she told the veterans and Magalang residents gathered at a covered court in front of the municipal grounds here.

3rd visit

In her third visit to this town at the foothills of Mt. Arayat, she assured her province mates: "I won't fail you," citing her commitment to serve the country.

But again, she stressed the need to be united. "Let us unite. We can build the nation, our province, our town through our unity," she said.

To the applause of her listeners, the President said the root of the Hukbalahap rebellion is being addressed by her administration.

She said landlessness was the woe of her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal. She said land reform, which was her father's key program, is her administration's priority.

According to her, land reform and its accompanying agricultural modernization will help win the war against poverty within the decade—a target she has set when she assumed power last Jan. 20 through Edsa II.

Macapagal program

"I am following my father's (land reform) program so we can see peace in our country," she said in Kapampangan.

She said her administration remains committed to her thrusts of having a good investment climate for the creation of jobs, social reforms and morality in government.

But the presidency, she admitted, is faced with difficult tasks, which she did not elaborate. These, however, can be made less difficult if there is unity.

Unity, she emphasized, was a way to defend the gains of Edsa II, the people's protests that ousted President Joseph Estrada and that installed her to power.

"Peace, prosperity and democracy are the ways to have good governance," she said.

She said she would wage the "new and peaceful revolution" around these objectives that the people had long wanted.

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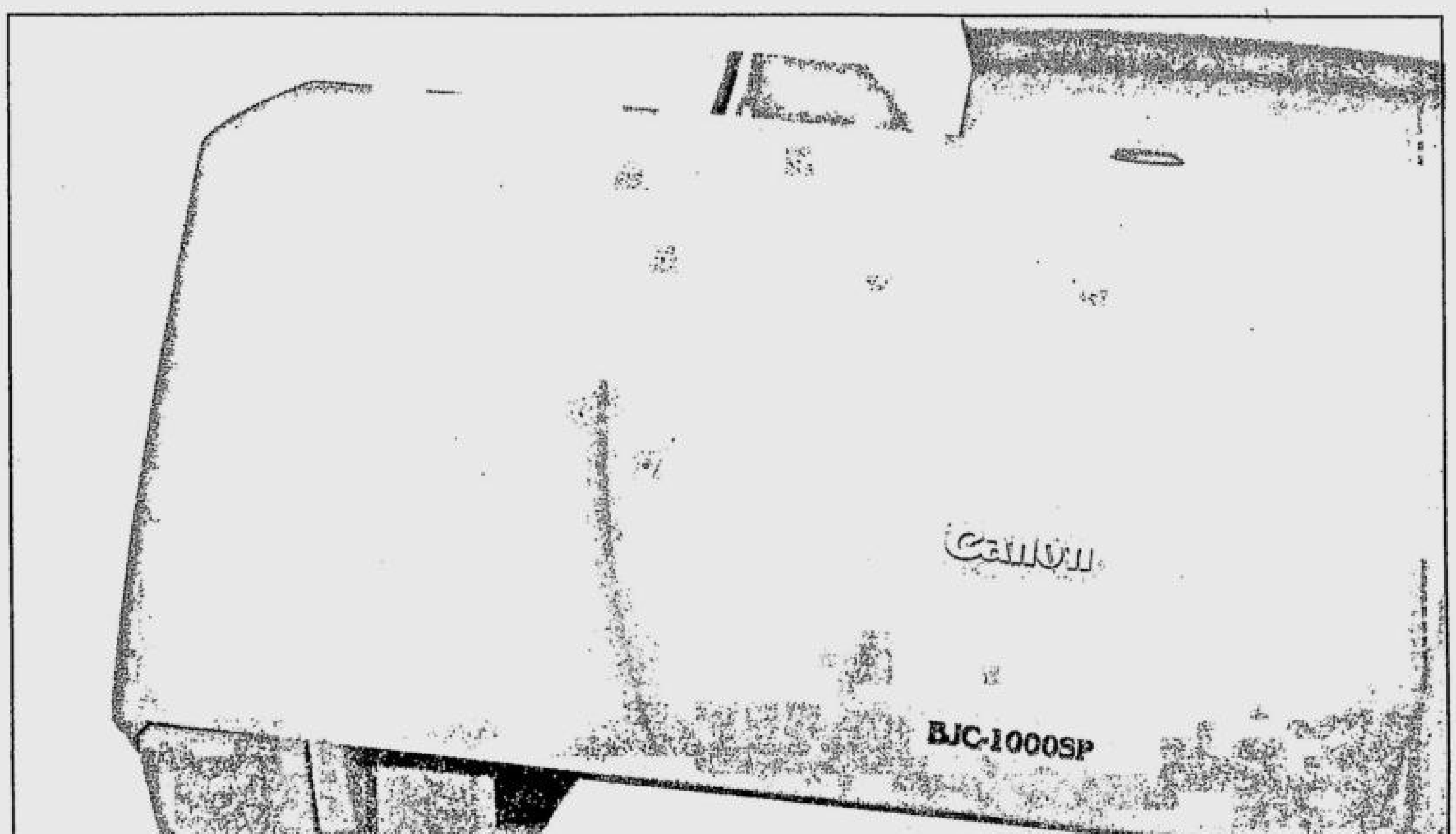

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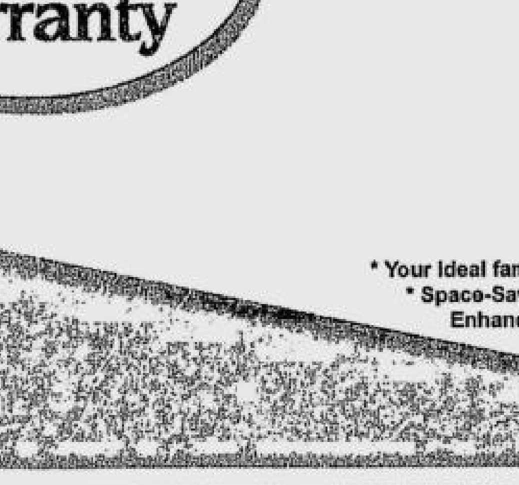

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Farmers hit harassment by labor exec's 'goons'

By Cynthia A. Borgueta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—At least 189 farmers in four upland villages in the towns of San Miguel and AlangAlang in Leyte have accused National Labor Relations Commissioner Vicente Veloso of allegedly hiring goons to harass them and force them out of their lands.

The charges were contained in separate complaints filed by the farmers on Monday before the regional offices here of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

The farmers appealed to Pedro Calixto, DENR executive director for Eastern Visayas, and DAR regional director Reynaldo Villas for assistance, claiming they were ejected from their farmlands early this year by Veloso.

The petitioners claimed that they were beaten up, slapped and their houses destroyed by heavily armed men allegedly hired by Veloso since February this year.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Veloso in his office at the NLRC main office in Manila but was told he was out of town.

The affected farmers were residents of Barangays Tabangohay, Veteranos and Cacao in AlangAlang and Guinsiyaman and Busay in San Miguel.

The farmers complained that the DENR and DAR included their lands when they awarded early this year to Veloso a land ownership certificates for 176 hectares of farmlands.

The 176 hectares are spread across the villages of Tabangohay in AlangAlang, where at least 50 farmers were allegedly displaced.

"We owned the land but eventually, we were forced to leave the place," the 189 farmers-signatories said.

They questioned the legality of the ownership papers given to Veloso since the DAR already issued certificates of land ownership to them in 1994.

The affected farmers in Barangay Guinsiyaman, for example, claimed they have been tilling their farmlands for 40 years now.

Calixto was not available for interview when the INQUIRER went to his office Tuesday.

The petition said that the farmers were forced to leave their homes and farms early this year after heavily armed men whom they suspected to be goons of Veloso threatened to harm them if they did not leave the place at once.

Pablo Ovento, a resident of Guinsiyaman, claimed that Veloso slapped him in the ear after he refused to leave his farm in March.

Suhenyo Condes, a former resident of Busay, also claimed that alleged armed goons of Veloso destroyed his house in April when he refused to leave his farm.

The petition said that because of fear, many of the affected farmers were forced to sell their lands to Veloso "at a very oppressive price."

But majority of them, the petition said, "just left the place because there was no more reason for them to stay as their farms were being tilled by others they did not know."

Seventy residents-farmers in Sitio Danao of Barangay Guinsiyaman claimed they were forced to leave their farms, totaling 500 hectares, because "we were left with no choice after (the) 'goons' of Veloso substituted us."

Solon vows to stop eviction due to channel

MINALIN, Pampanga—Pampanga Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc, the proponent of an artificial floodwater channel formerly called the Erap River, vowed to stop the displacement here of at least 1,000 families from the project's dredging and widening work.

Bondoc said he would "ensure that the project would save, not harm the residents."

He said he has arranged a meeting with officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways next week to seek a change in the alignment of the project, now called the Third River, whose widening work will start on the eastern bank of the San Francisco River.

This section of the riverbank cuts across Barangays Sta. Catalina, San Francisco I, Bulac and Maniango where some 1,000 families have rebuilt their homes after the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruptions and lahar flows.

The residents, who received notices for the project's right-of-way last week, have asked the DPWH and its Mount Pinatubo Emergency-Project Management Office to spare their villages.

They proposed that the widening work should be confined to the western bank, where no houses stand and where lots are not cultivated for farms or fishponds.

"I am very concerned about this," Bondoc said of the residents' fear of dislocation.

He said he would "exert all efforts to realign the project."

While he proposed the Third River in 1998, Bondoc clarified he had no role in the design of the 37-km long channel which seeks to align 12 tributaries (not 10 as earlier reported) in the City of San Fernando and the towns of Mexico, Sto. Tomas, Bacolor, Minalin and Macabebe.

The project ends at the Pasac River, located at the mouth of the Pampanga Bay, the province's main drain of floodwaters toward Manila Bay.

This will be the third major river in the province, after the Pampanga and Pasig-Potrero rivers.

The design was made by Nippon Koie, the consultant of the P900-million project, a DPWH report said.

The Third River received the biggest budget share among six projects funded on a P3.5-billion loan of the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation for the DPWH's Mt. Pinatubo emergency measures, the report said.

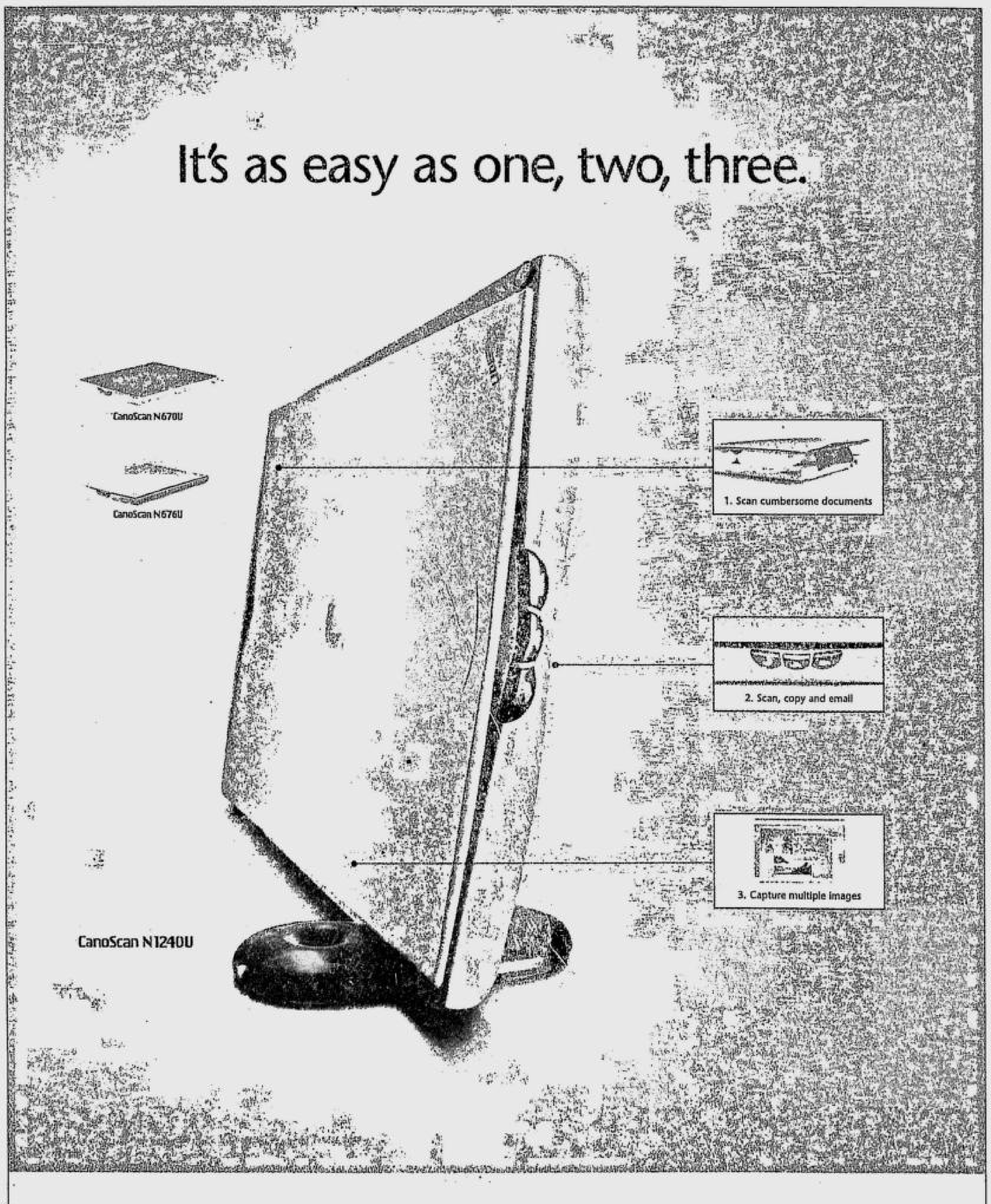
The Third River, according to the report, was "only a temporary relief against high stagnant water" in areas covered by the project.

It said Nippon Koie was scheduled to finish in May 2002 a feasibility study which would recommend a "permanent solution" to months-long, widespread flooding in Pampanga.

Minalin Mayor Edgar Flores said any flood-control project should "not disrupt the communities but support their efforts to recover from the (Mt. Pinatubo) disaster."

Bondoc said there "has to be a shift in the design (of the Third River) based on the local environment."

The contract agreement awaits the approval of Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong. The project is expected to start late this month and to be completed in April 2003. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***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Canon

Poor governance blamed for Iloilo's economic woes

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Poor local governance is being blamed for the economic decline of this city once dubbed the "Queen City of the South."

Winston Conrad Padojinog, an economist of the University of Asia and the Pacific, said Iloilo lagged behind other urban centers in the South like Cebu because public policymakers failed to alleviate widespread poverty among the city's residents.

"Economic production will never pick up unless there is an increase in demand from consumers," Padojinog told reporters here last week during the Economic Summit 2001.

At least 100 representatives from the local government units, business groups, academe, media and economic development agencies attended the summit that was jointly organized by the city and provincial governments.

Its aim was to identify common problems faced by the city and the province and to map out comprehensive and coordinated "workable action plans."

'Rent-seeking'

Padojinog, who discussed Iloilo's economic situation, said local officials should practice good public governance by promoting law and order and by minimizing corruption and "rent-seeking."

He urged the private sector to respect the "human dignity of labor" by not sacrificing workers to ensure profits of business. He said businessmen should pay taxes and "channel surplus wealth to the betterment of society."

As a framework for economic development plans, Padojinog said the most important thrust should be poverty alleviation to ensure a stable market.

Roller coaster

He urged local officials to give utmost priority to education and nutritional care of children, as these are indispensable in raising the standard of living of the people.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said major problems confront the national and local economy.

"Our economy is currently undergoing a radical roller coaster ride as an aftermath of the Sept. 11 terror attacks in New York and other factors similarly affecting the economies of the Asia Pacific Region," he said.

Ma. Luisa Segovia, chair of the Iloilo Business Club (IBC), said the economy is in the "worst of times" with "limited options." The IBC is composed of more than 90 senior business executive here.

Summit organizers, however, were confident that the Ilonggo spirit of ingenuity and hard work would help hasten the economy's recovery.

The participants envisioned Iloilo as the agri-business and service hub of Western Visayas after they drew up a list of key problems and corresponding action plans to be implemented in the next two years.

Among the priority areas identified were tourism, governance, environment, food security and infrastructure.

Absent

But while the summit delved on addressing poverty, there was no representative from nongovernment organizations and militant political groups.

"We were not invited or even consulted with their proposals," said Samuel Torrato, chair of the urban poor group Katilingban sang Imol sa Syudad.

Jeffrey Celiz, chair of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said the recent summit would "just remain as motherhood statements if it worshipped the economic programs and policies of the national government in all the past administrations."

Treñas said the results of the summit would be presented to both the provincial and city governments so that these would be transformed into concrete projects.

The mayor signed a memorandum of agreement with Manuel Mejorada, executive assistant of Gov. Niel Tupas, creating the Iloilo Investment and Tourism Promotion Board, which would act as a coordinating body in the implementation of the plans of the city and provincial governments.

Palace asked to help prosecute raps vs Chavit

VIGAN CITY—The Save Ilocos Sur Alliance on Friday challenged Malacañang to help expedite the cases against former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson at the Ombudsman.

"I challenge President Macapagal-Arroyo to stand firm on her commitment to rid her administration of graft and corruption by keeping her hands off the cases filed against Singson and hastening their investigation," lawyer Estelita Cordero, Sisa legal counsel, said.

"If this would be denied, graft and corruption is blessed and (is) a way of life in the Macapagal presidency."

Sisa has so far filed four charges against Singson, including the plunder case, because of the alleged "rampant, continuous and irresponsible" release of public funds in Ilocos Sur during his incumbency, she said.

The plunder case stemmed from the incomplete documentation involving the release of more than P899 million used in various projects of the provincial government.

Singson has denied the Sisa allegations and has even urged their immediate resolution.

"I am asking the Ombudsman to act with dispatch so I can address the charges," he said in a statement.

He said a 1999 special audit by the Commission on Audit did not recommend the filing of charges against him.

He said the charges were filed by a group led by a defeated gubernatorial candidate from Vigan. The same group, he added, is trying to ingratiate itself with the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) of deposed President Joseph Estrada. ***Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Chaos warned if 'lumads' armed

MATI, Davao Oriental—Militant groups here warned of an impending "chaos" after the provincial government announced it would push through with its plan of arming Mandaya *lumads* in rebel-infested towns.

The plan, government officials claimed, would help solve the seemingly uncontrollable insurgency problem.

However, Imam Mohammed Ali Hanapia Manuel, Al Haj of the Ulama League of the Philippines said it could instead turn dangerous.

"That's very dangerous. Arming the civilians would worsen the situation, making it uncontrollable and very chaotic," Manuel, also one of the convenors of the Tri-People Coalition of Davao Oriental, said.

The *lumads* earlier said they managed to kill at least 10 NPA rebels since they declared a tribal war against the NPA two months ago.

But Karapatan said those killed were innocent farmers suspected to be NPA rebels.

The group said at least 90 "innocent civilians" here have died of torture in the hands of the military, militiamen and armed civilians.

Most of the abuses allegedly took place in the towns of Caraga, Cateel, Baganga, Tarragona, Lupon, Banaybanay and Mati.

"Innocent farmers in Davao Oriental who were suspected of being communists or NPA rebels have been killed by these armed civilians who were provided firearms by the military. Now the provincial government intends to allocate funds for the purchase of firearms to be given to civilians. That's a very stupid idea. We should stop this madness," Karapatan said in a statement.

Earlier, Alejandro Aquino, the provincial legal officer admitted to the INQUIRER that Mandaya *lumads* received firearms from the military when they launched a "pangayao" or tribal war against the NPA.

Vice Gov. Thelma Almario also said the provincial government planned to allocate funds for the purchase of firearms "to be given to civilians in rebel-infested towns in the province."

Despite the objections, Almario said the plan would push through.

She said a similar move from previous officials "was proven effective during the time of former Davao Oriental Gov. Leopoldo Lopez."

She also said arming the civilians would not financially burden the provincial government because what would be purchased are "bukakang" or homemade shotguns instead of high-powered firearms.

The military said the plan was very welcome.

"We only have 200 personnel in Davao Oriental and the number of enemy is quite big. So arming of civilians is really a big help to the military to flush out the rebels," Maj. Alexis Gopico, commander of the Army's 8th Special Forces Battalion said.

The militant groups said if the plan pushes through, they would stage rallies and protest to put a stop to the "militarization of the civilian communities."

"Arming civilians will heighten the already strong anti-Muslim and anti-Christian sentiments among the people and that is very dangerous. The tense situation may blow out of proportion because of that plan. The government should really think about this very carefully and consult us, the Bishops-Ulama and Imams-Priests Forum, so we can craft a peaceful means to solve the conflict. Let's heal the past and build the future," Imam Ruperto Manuel of the Tri-People Coalition of Davao Oriental said. ***Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

HOUSE GUESTS EV ESPIRITU

Children's attention are drawn to a playhouse built out of wood and displayed on a Baguio City street along with other Christmas merchandise.

Group hails House body backing of airport deal

A NON-government organization expressed gratitude to the House committee on transportation and communications for declaring the Naia Terminal 3 contract valid and binding.

In a statement, Virgilio Ilagan, executive director of the NGO Protect Filipino Movement, said the committee ruling should put an end to bickerings over the project.

"This is a good time to stop bickering and let the work begin," Ilagan said in his statement.

The committee, after investigating the contract, issued a statement upholding the contract "because it is consistent with official government policy."

Ilagan was quoted as saying that the country "cannot afford to waste time in the completion of the airport."

The current passenger traffic of the Naia Terminal 1 has long exceeded its capacity of 5 million passengers a year.

"Naia 1 is also suffering from dilapidated exteriors and deteriorating facilities," Ilagan said.

He said the Philippines is lagging behind in terms of airport facilities in the Southeast Asian region.

"It is unfortunate that in spite of the clear need for a new terminal, many groups are trying to stall the Naia 3," said Ilagan.

"That is almost like getting in the way of progress and development."

Another investigation of the Naia 3 contract is being done by the House committee on good government.

Earlier the transportation committee of the House expressed support for the contract.

"The bottom line is we badly need a new airport terminal and previous governments have entered into valid agreements with the group that will build it for us," said Ilagan.

"I do not understand why anyone would want to muddle up such a simple, sensible idea."

3 water firm execs face suit over GSIS fees

SAN FERNANDO CITY—Three officials of the Metro La Union Water District, a government owned and controlled corporation, are in hot water for allegedly failing to remit P2 million in Government Service Insurance System contributions of the agency's employees from February to December last year.

MLUWD general manager Felipe Picazo, administrative officer Virginia Avecilla and cashier Pablo Lao were ordered arrested by Judge Eugenio Dacumos of the municipal trial court here, but posted bail of P2,000 each.

The court acted on a criminal case filed last month by the Metro La Union Water District Employees Association (MLUWDEA), through its president Evelyn Wailan.

Earlier, the group also filed an administrative complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman after they found that their contributions had not been remitted to the GSIS since the last quarter of 1999, thus preventing the employees from availing themselves of loans.

In a resolution issued on July 27 this year, Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Jesus Guerrero meted out an administrative penalty equivalent to 45 days' salary to Picazo and company for "simple neglect of duty." The penalty has yet to be imposed by the MLUWD board of directors.

In a separate resolution, Guerrero also found Picazo, Avecilla and Lao "indictable" for violation of the GSIS Act (Republic Act 8291).

Section 52 of the act provides that "the treasurer, finance officer, cashier . . . or other official who fails or refuses or delays (the payment of contributions) shall . . . suffer the penalties of imprisonment . . ., fine . . ., and absolute perpetual disqualification from holding public office."

In their counter-affidavit, Picazo, Avecilla and Lao claimed they had "no intention not to remit to the GSIS." They said the agency was under heavy financial pressure since it was unable to "meet the expected revenues and cash collections" and had started "amortizing for its loan with the Land Bank (of the Philippines) in June 2000."

They also reasoned that the MLUWD does not receive any financial support from the national government.

The LBP loan of P15 million was for the new MLUWD office building constructed in 1999, and for which the water district had to raise a counterpart of P5 million, court records showed.

The MLUWDEA has also lodged a petition with the regional trial court here to stop Picazo from allegedly "abusing his authority" over and retaliating against the complaining employees.

Since the administrative case was filed, two officers of the MLUWDEA had already been dismissed, and one suspended for one year, the petition said. ***Gia Damaso Dumo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

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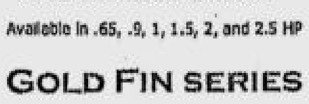

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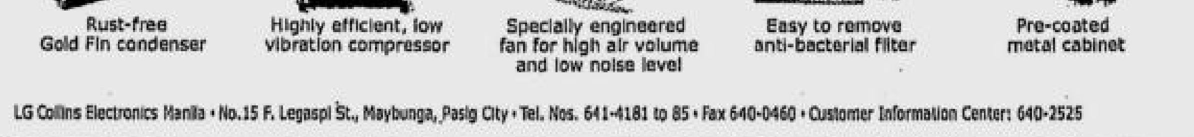

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UNPAID IRRIGATION FEES

C. Mindanao farmers owe NIA ₱756M

COTABATO CITY—Tillers in Central Mindanao, mostly owners of vast tracks of ricefields, are indebted by at least P756 million representing unpaid irrigation fees to the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

Macmod Mending, NIA director for Central Mindanao, said these unpaid accounts, which he considered "alarming," started to accumulate in the 1950s and have since ballooned to that amount.

The debt would reach more than P800 million "if we have to include the interests and surcharges," said Mending.

He said the NIA which is supposed to be a self-sustaining agency of the government has virtually become subservient to the national government for its maintenance and operating expenses due to the huge unpaid accounts of farmers, mostly "big landowners and those influential people in the community."

Mending declined to identify NIA's big debtors, whom he said hail from North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and Maguindanao.

"The biggest debtors are recipients of the Libungan Irrigation System that include farmers of Pigcawayan, Libungan and Midsayap municipalities in North Cotabato," he said.

"Next (in the list) are farmers served by the Lambayong Irrigation System in Sultan Kudarat province and followed by farmers enjoying the services of the M'lang Irrigation System in North Cotabato," he added.

He reminded delinquent farmers that by January they should expect their statement of accounts, and asked those with complaints to direct it to his office before they go to court.

Transfer of land ownership and dishonest NIA collectors are some of the reasons behind the poor collection, Mending noted.

He admitted that one of their collectors was caught not remitting collections to the regional office.

"There might be others (involved in irregularities), and we are looking into it."

Mending, whose office is located in Barangay Villarica, Midsayap, North Cotabato, has called for an investigation of the alleged irregularities in the construction of the P2.7 billion Malitubog-Maridagao (Malmar) irrigation project in Carmen, North Cotabato.

A group of farmers wrote to allege that some "NIA field engineers" supervising the construction of the Malmar irrigation project have defrauded the government of several millions of pesos through the continued delay of its completion, citing as reason the unstable peace and order condition in the province.

Mending has recommended that North Cotabato Rep. Lala Taliño-Santos initiate an investigation of the complaints, saying "let the people involved suffer the consequences" and the government "file appropriate cases against them."

According to Mending, the Malmar project is undertaken by its project OIC-manager Noldin Oyod, who reports directly to the NIA central office in Manila.

Mending said the Malmar irrigation project, which is supposed to irrigate 10,000 hectares of riceland in North Cotabato and Maguindanao, was first constructed in 1989.

The project will be turned over to the NIA regional office after one cropping season to ensure that the system is working well, Mending said.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Eastern section of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao inlcuding palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 22°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 24° Lo 14°
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 19°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 21°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 22°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 18°
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 25°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 21°
Bacolod	Mostly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 23°
Roxas	Mostly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 24°
Cebu	Mostly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 21°
Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 23°
Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 23°
Davao	Mostly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Chona Galang, PDI Research/12/17/01

Gov tells town execs to enforce ecology laws

MANOLO FORTICH, Bukidnon—Gov. Jose Zubiri has directed mayors here to enforce environmental laws in their areas, particularly on the protection of critical watersheds.

However, Zubiri said the order was not aimed at downgrading the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Zubiri said it was issued because there was a need for local executives and their constituents to be actively involved in the environmental protection of their areas.

"We don't mean (to say) that the DENR is inutile. My point was that first of all, the mayors should be involved in the implementation of (environmental) laws," he said.

Zubiri said although local executives should take an active role in the protection of the environment, they would also have to work with the DENR.

He said the fast dwindling forest cover of the province have caused an alarm that even residents have started planting trees.

"The people are also helping us. The people are planting gmelina, mangium and other trees along the road. Even private lands are being planted (with trees) now because we do not want our province's natural resources to further deteriorate," Zubiri said.

Bukidnon has a total land area of 829,378 hectares, of which 580,540 hectares are classified as upland.

"Thirty percent of the upland area, or about 174,000 hectares, remains forested today compared to ten years ago," Zubiri said.

Manolo Fortich Mayor Corazon Acosta meanwhile said local executives on Wednesday drafted a five-year development action plan for the rehabilitation and protection of the province's remaining watershed areas.

Acosta said the drafting of the action plan was prompted by observations that the town's water supply has been receding.

The decline in the town's water supply, she said, even caused a reduction in crop harvest in the lowlands.

Acosta disclosed that Maridagao River in Kalilangan town is the most affected by the degradation of the watershed areas.

Zubiri said the province needs at least P100 million to complete its reforestation program over a five-year period.

However, for the initial phase of the program that would start in January, Zubiri said the provincial government has set aside P5 million.

"We would start in Kalilangan then (go) down to the other areas we identified as having the most critical forest cover. We have to do this now because if we wait for the national government, nothing will happen," Zubiri said.

The other areas included in the five-year action plan were Panantukan, Talakaga, Libona and Baungon towns and Malaybalay City.

Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Zambo school exec defies suspension

DIPOLOG CITY—The Commission on Higher Education urged the Ombudsman to reprimand the president of a government-run college in Zamboanga del Norte for continuously defying a six-month suspension order meted on him in connection with a sexual harassment charge.

Ester Albano Garcia, chair of the commission said Felipe Ligan, president of the Jose Rizal Memorial State College and his lawyer Board Member Uldarico Mejorada were "defying with arrogance" the order issued by Ombudsman Aniano Desierto.

"Reports reaching the commission said that Mr. Ligan has continued exercising (the) powers and prerogatives of a state college president even in the face of your executory decision. He convened an illegal meeting of his officials to 'elect' his hand-picked successor to the presidency of the college which is gross defiance of the provision on selection of state college president under Republic Act 8292," Garcia said.

Garcia said he believes that Mejorada advised Ligan to defy the Ombudsman order issued on Nov. 15.

Desierto found Ligan guilty of sexually harassing a teacher last year.

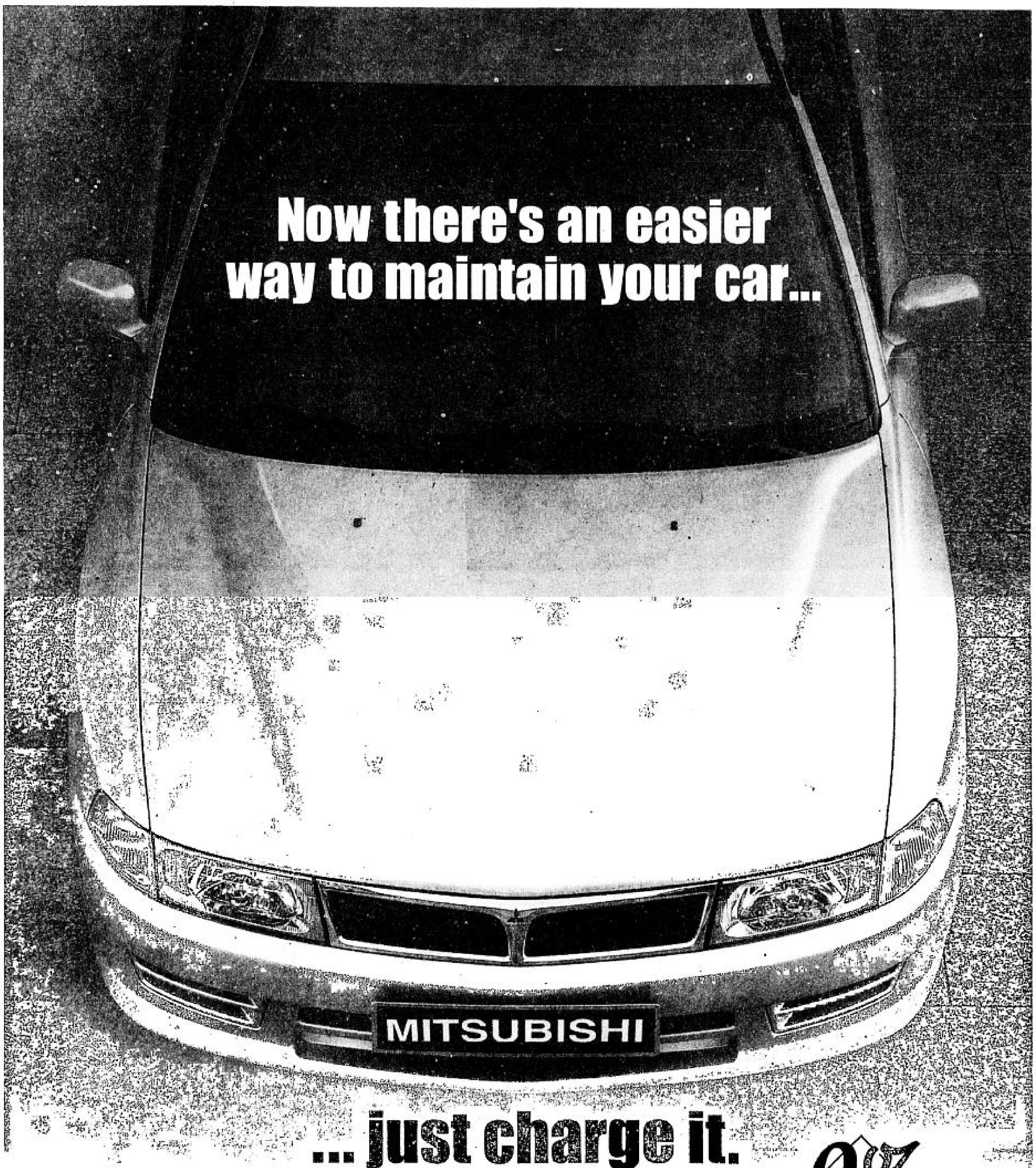
Ligan, a close ally of convicted rapist Rep. Romeo Jalosjos of Zamboanga del Norte, was also earlier suspended by the CHEd for alleged irregularities.

On Aug. 23 this year he was "retired" by CHEd through the college's board of trustees (BOT) after he reached the mandatory retirement age of 65 in Aug. 23.

However, he continued holding office saying that his appointment has yet to expire on Jan. 9, 2002.

Ligan even appointed new employees and issued memoranda to instructors and professors that created confusion among students and employees.

Lullie Micabalo, PDI Mindanao Bureau



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₱. 5-M shopping splurge

(From page A1)

Reporters and TV crews also followed her every move, because Lejani Nitullano was the winner of a credit card company's unusual sales promotion.

Her prize: the chance to spend P500,000 in one day, at Rustan's Makati.

But instead of wasting the money on whimsical self-pampering, Nitullano gathered 15 relatives, some of whom came all the way from Naga City, and allowed them to choose the gifts she would give them for Christmas.

Records from Rustan's accounting office showed that Nitullano eventually bought 10 TV sets, two refrigerators, three VCD players, two washing machines, two microwave ovens and seven cellular phones.

For herself, she bought clothes from several of the department store's exclusive labels, plus signature watches, skin care products and perfume.

Officers of HSBC, the credit card firm, and employees of Rustan's noted that the bulk of Nitullano's purchases went to relatives.

A female accounting officer remarked that Nitullano, an employee at the Philippine Army Finance Center, "should buy more for herself."

In the final stretch of her shopping marathon, Nitullano accompanied her nieces to the toys' section.

Niece Fiona, 13, earlier told the INQUIRER that she had asked for a cellular phone. Krista, 8, wished for a makeup kit, but later insisted she only asked Tita Lejan to buy "jewelry for Mama."

Twelve-year-old Carmela asked for a remote control car, while 6-year-old Princess said she'd be happy to have anything with Blossom (one of the cartoon Powerpuff Girls) in it.

New card

Nitullano had called up HSBC on Dec. 2—two Sundays ago—to ask whether the Red Mastercard she had recently applied for was already ready for use.

Aside from getting a confirmation, she also heard the voice at the other end of the line tell her that she had won the raffle. She was told to wait for a call from the bank confirming her prize.

She found the whole thing hard to believe, she said.

LEJANI Nitullano, an accounting clerk who won a P500,000 shopping prize in a credit card contest, tries a signature blouse at Rustan's Makati on Sunday. JOAN BONDOC

"I was at home that time. I told my sister May about it. She was also surprised and very happy. I was also happy but I still could not believe the whole thing then," she told the INQUIRER in Filipino as she took a break from the shopping splurge early yesterday afternoon.

While waiting for confirmation, Nitullano decided it wouldn't hurt to start making a gift list.

Originally, she had saved P10,000 to buy Christmas gifts for her family.

"I only saved that much. I know it's very little. But the news triggered an urge to start the list of gifts and names," she shyly admitted.

The Wednesday after Nitullano called the bank, HSBC's Nona Villapana phoned Nitullano at work to confirm the P500,000 shopping prize.

Nitullano said the news was too much for her to bear. She went over to the desk of her cousin Mayette, an officemate, and shared the news with her.

"Mayette called HSBC three times. Each time, she talked to a different person and the answer was all the same. 'Ma'am, it's really true,' all of them told Mayette."

It was only then, she said, that the news finally sank in. But she remained overwhelmed, and it was her cousin who had to tell the rest of the family the good news.

Nitullano's mother Glenda had a thanksgiving Mass celebrated.

HSBC convoy

Yesterday, a convoy of vans carrying HSBC and Rustan's employees came to fetch Nitullano and her relatives from an aunt's house in Cainta, Rizal, to bring them to the department store.

Crews from two television stations were among those who fetched her. From Cainta, they recorded her family's journey to Makati City as well as her initial purchases in the morning.

Many among those who escorted Nitullano's family around the store later conceded that it was probably her generous spirit that pleased the gods of chance, allowing her to win the big prize.

Erap knee surgery next?

(From page A1)

out of the eye hospital at around 11 a.m., donning tinted eyeglasses but looking very pleased over his operation.

In an unscheduled interview with the press, he even dropped a hearty greeting. "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, especially to the poor," he said as cameras rolled.

The Sandiganbayan had allowed the former President to undergo surgery, but turned down his other demands, including a trip to the United States for a knee replacement operation and a visit home for Christmas.

Left eye

"His cataract surgery was a complete success," Estrada family physician Larry Hocson said, as he commended the surgical team for a "job well done."

He also said the ex-President was sedated and put to sleep "for about two hours" after the actual operation, which involved the removal of a cataract in his left eye and the replacement of his natural lens with an intraocular lens.

AEI ophthalmologists Amado Veloso and Harvey Uy performed the surgery.

With the long-delayed operation finally accomplished, Hocson said Estrada is now expected to regain "improved, near normal vision."

Ferdie Ramos, a close Estrada aide, said that after the procedure, Dr. Veloso immediately wrote the Sandiganbayan for permission to have Estrada brought back to the AEI for post-operative checkups today and on three more days—Dec. 19, 21 and 23.

Hocson acknowledged that it would be difficult to get court approval today, a national holiday declared in observance of the last day of the Muslim fasting season of Ramadan. He said one alternative was for Veloso to be given permission to see Estrada at the VMMC.

Hocson said that with Estrada's eye problem now solved, the ex-President's "next objective" is to secure a similarly favorable court ruling on Estrada's petition to undergo surgery in the United States for his arthritic knees.

FORMER President Joseph Estrada points to his left eye following a successful cataract surgery at the Asian Eye Institute in Makati City on Sunday. REUTERS

"That's our next objective. As you (will) notice, he still walks with a big limp," the physician told the INQUIRER in a phone interview hours after the eye operation.

Asked whether Estrada would soon need a wheelchair if his knees remained untreated, Hocson replied: "Well, perhaps not now, but it might get to that point. He's not getting any younger."

The pain Estrada has been bearing in his arthritic knees, Hocson added, has also been aggravated by the cold December climate.

Non-bailable offense

Aside from the cataract and a cyst in his left eye, Estrada has complained of other health problems that have lately prevented him from attending his trial for the capital and non-bailable offense of economic plunder. He was arrested on April 25 and put on trial Oct. 1.

The Sandiganbayan last week canceled the rest of his trial proceedings this month after the judge assigned to handle his plunder case was suspended.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court indefinitely barred Justice Anacleto Badoy from handling Estrada's trial until it resolves questions about his neutrality and conduct. The trial is set to resume Jan. 7.

Badoy's removal is one of several problems plaguing the first-ever corruption trial of a Philippine president. The trial has been mired in weeks of legal wrangling and hampered by Estrada's health problems and a feud between Badoy and the anti-graft court's presiding justice, Francis Garchitorena.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, who heads Estrada's prosecutors, also faces impeachment proceedings for alleged bribery.

Estrada's case of plunder is defined as a series of criminal acts to amass P50 million or more. He was initially jailed but, after complaining about his health, was transferred in May to the VMMC, where he has remained.

He has also been charged with two cases of perjury. Investigators say he allegedly understated his assets in 1998 and 1999, and illegally used an alias to hide questionable funds in a bank account.

He has denied any wrongdoing.

With reports from AP, AFP

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PCGG to take over UCPB

(From page A1)

ing on Friday recognizing the right of the PCGG to vote all sequestered UCPB shares.

The high court declared on Friday that the coco levy funds were "public in character" as the levy was collected from 1973 to 1982 using the police and taxing powers of the State. The ruling may restore the government's control over SMC as UCPB administers a 27-percent stake in SMC (equivalent to five seats on the board) acquired with coco levy funds.

Carranza said UCPB shares were sequestered on the premise that the entire bank was acquired using coco levy funds.

Aside from the 27-percent stake, the government has an 11-percent interest in SMC (equivalent to two more seats) through the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System.

The ruling has also rendered moot any possible compromise agreement on the levy, which, according to critics, will only benefit Cojuangco and his associates at the Coconut Producers Federation of the Philippines (Cocofed), according to presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao.

"We don't have to wait for the stockholders' meeting (to come in). We can do it already," Carranza said of the ouster of the present members of the UCPB board. The UCPB stockholders' meeting is scheduled in March.

"We will have to do this (take over the board) immediately," he said. The government already has a list of nominees to the UCPB board. The government nominees include professional bankers and representatives of coconut farmers.

Carranza said the PCGG had already consultations with farmers' groups for the purpose of choosing nominees from them long before the Supreme Court had promulgated its decision on the UCPB case.

He disclosed that the list of government nominees was ready as early as April this year.

The UCPB board is currently chaired by Jeronimo U. Kilayko. Its directors are Juan J. Carlos, Lorenzo V. Tan, Virgilio S. Jacinto, Redentor T. Alegre, Albert Chua Gohu, Andres Y. Narvasa Jr., Romeo Odi, Manuel R. Pamaran, Rosario R. Razon, Danilo R. Reyes, Mila A. Reforma, Agustin P. Salgado Jr. and Rebecca A. Yñares.

Aquilino Pimentel III resigned as UCPB director in November 2000.

Carranza said the government would also take over all UCPB subsidiaries, including Coco Life, UCPB General Insurance, Cocochem, and the six oil mills under UCPB. The oil mills are Legaspi Oil Co. Inc., Cagayan de Oro Oil Co. Inc., Southern Luzon Coconut Oil Mills Inc., Granexport Manufacturing Co. and Iligan Coconut Industries Inc.

The oil mills own 14 holding companies—put up by UCPB—that acquired 31 percent of San Miguel in 1983. The mills are, in turn, owned by the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF). The 31-percent stake is down to 27 percent as 3 percent had been liquidated and went to the national treasury. One percent reportedly went to the PCGG as arbitrage fee.

Carranza said the PCGG would also have the right to look into the financial records of the UCPB, which may hold the key to the principal of the 14 holding companies that were incorporated by the Accra law firm.

He said it was important for the PCGG to look into the financial status of the bank, administrator of the coco levy funds and all assets acquired using the funds.

Five on the way out

Tiglao noted that five Estrada nominees to the SMC board—Estrada's brother-in-law Raul de Guzman, movie producer Esperidion Laxa, Hermogenes Tantoco, Allan Lee and Ben Paulino—failed to get "instructions" from the government, whose interest they were supposed to protect.

They have refused to vacate their seats, claiming only a stockholders' meeting can force them to step down.

"They should resign out of *delicadeza* because they're not representing Erap personally but the government," Tiglao said.

It has been reported that the Macapagal administration wants them replaced by former SSS president Renato Valencia, former Far East Bank president Octavio Espiritu, former Justice Hector Hofileña, Franklin Fuentabella and Leonardo Alvez.

The SMC board approved on Friday the 15-percent buy-in of Kirin.

Ms Macapagal was apparently not informed of the negotiations and "she wouldn't want such a thing to happen again, because as government appointees, they should inform the President," Tiglao told reporters.

Purely business

Tiglao said Ms Macapagal's statement that she would not oust Cojuangco as SMC chair despite the Supreme Court ruling, which virtually gave government control over the food and beverage giant, was purely business not politics.

"Cojuangco is almost entirely a business agent and his dealings with the government on the matter of San Miguel is only on the corporate level," he said.

Tiglao said no unwarranted accommodation was being accorded by the Macapagal administration to Cojuangco, a close friend and patron of Estrada and also founding chair of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), a major bloc in Congress.

"Although the government has claims over SMC, this has nothing to do with politics," Tiglao told Palace reporters in a teleconference.

"Not at all," Tiglao responded when asked if the government now considers Cojuangco its new political ally, although he conceded that Cojuangco's NPC was a "major party."

Tiglao said Malacañang was simply following normal corporate practices in allowing Cojuangco to stay on as SMC chair and chief executive officer.

Tiglao said Cojuangco was the single biggest stockholder in SMC with a 20-percent stake, a subject of litigation before the Sandiganbayan.

"Usually in such corporate hierarchy, the single biggest stockholder can nominate the chair," Tiglao said.

The PCGG is also seeking to recover the 20-percent stake and a separate bloc of 27 percent constituting P50 billion of the disputed coconut levy funds.

"There's a court case that hasn't been resolved and he is claiming to have 20 percent, which means he is not yet found guilty," Tiglao said of Cojuangco.

Tiglao reiterated that the government would still evaluate the Cojuangco-brokered sale of 15 percent of SMC shares worth $540 million to Kirin.

Tiglao, however, echoed Ms Macapagal's initial reaction that the Japanese investment was a major shot in the arm of the economy.

"It is a boost to our image as an investment area especially that the Japanese are known to be one of the most conservative investors," Tiglao said.

He said the Kirin deal would have to be ratified during the SMC stockholders' meeting in February.

Asked if the government would eventually endorse the Kirin sale, Tiglao said: "It depends if we think it's a good deal. If it is not, we can raise some issues."

He acknowledged the claim by Cojuangco lawyer Estelito Mendoza that government representatives from the SSS and GSIS did not oppose the Kirin deal when it was tabled for discussion at the SMC board.

"What transpired at the board of directors meeting was verbal at the very least. They (SSS and GSIS representatives) should have gotten instructions from the government, which is their principal. Apparently they didn't," Tiglao said.

SMC sale to Kirin blocked

(From page A1)

lock-up period, three other factors could be raised in court, he said.

These are the lack of transparency in the transaction, dilution of government shares as a result of the Kirin deal, and transfer of effective control of SMC to Cojuangco that could lead to the dissipation of the government-sequestered shares.

Carranza said the sale of 15 percent of SMC to Kirin for $540 million could be questioned in the stockholders' meeting in February because the "vote trust agreement" approved by the SMC board on Friday still needed the stockholders' approval.

Carranza said the deal could still be questioned in court, even before the Supreme Court, as it would affect the coconut farmers' interest. This is particularly crucial as the Supreme Court had already ruled on the "public character" of the coco levy funds. Twenty-seven percent of SMC had been acquired using the coco levy funds. The PCGG has sequestered this block of shares.

"We have no objection to the entry of Kirin in San Miguel. What we are questioning is the lock-up period of Kirin with the Cojuangco bloc that would exclusively benefit Cojuangco," Carranza said.

Control by Cojuangco

Kirin, which holds 16 percent of SMC's unissued shares, was required under the deal to vote along with Cojuangco, who has 17 percent (originally 20 percent before the dilution of shares) of SMC shares, for the next five years. This may allow Cojuangco to get majority control of SMC.

The combined shares of Kirin and Cojuangco would be 33 percent, higher than the coco levy shares of the government, originally at 27 percent but which could be diluted to 24 percent.

If the government shares are reduced to 24 percent, the government can only claim one or two board seats on the SMC 15-member board, according to Carranza.

Right now, the government has a total of seven board seats—two from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Social Security System (SSS) and the five supposedly sitting for the 27-percent sequestered shares.

Carranza said the deal was "fundamentally wrong" because the shares bought by Kirin were the unissued shares of SMC and did not come from the 20-percent stake that Cojuangco was claiming.

He said the PCGG might question before the Supreme Court the deal, which, he added, was approved by the SMC board that included five nominees of former President Joseph Estrada, which supposedly represented the PCGG.

"They cannot claim to represent government. We have already disowned them," Carranza said.

"The threshold concern is lack of transparency. The fact is that we are not properly represented in the board because the five were not nominees of the present PCGG but of former President Estrada," he explained.

The five nominees supposedly sit as representatives of the government for the 27-percent sequestered San Miguel shares purchased using coco levy funds.

The PCGG has a pending case with the Supreme Court, asking the tribunal to order the booting out of Raul de Guzman, Benjamin Paulino, Esperidion Laxa, Hermogenes Tantoco and Allan Lee.

The five nominees have not reported to the PCGG since they started sitting on the SMC board.

Carranza said he supposed that the two representatives of the GSIS and SSS had objected to the deal.

"Our right to object has been hampered by the fact that we are not represented in the board," Carranza said.

He said the PCGG was also concerned about the dilution of the SMC shares.

Carranza said the lack of transparency in the transaction was a cause for concern for the PCGG.

Counter-offer

He said the PCGG's counter-offer for a foreign investor to work with the government and participate in the public bidding on the combined government shares would be more beneficial not only to the coconut farmers, but also to the investors as well.

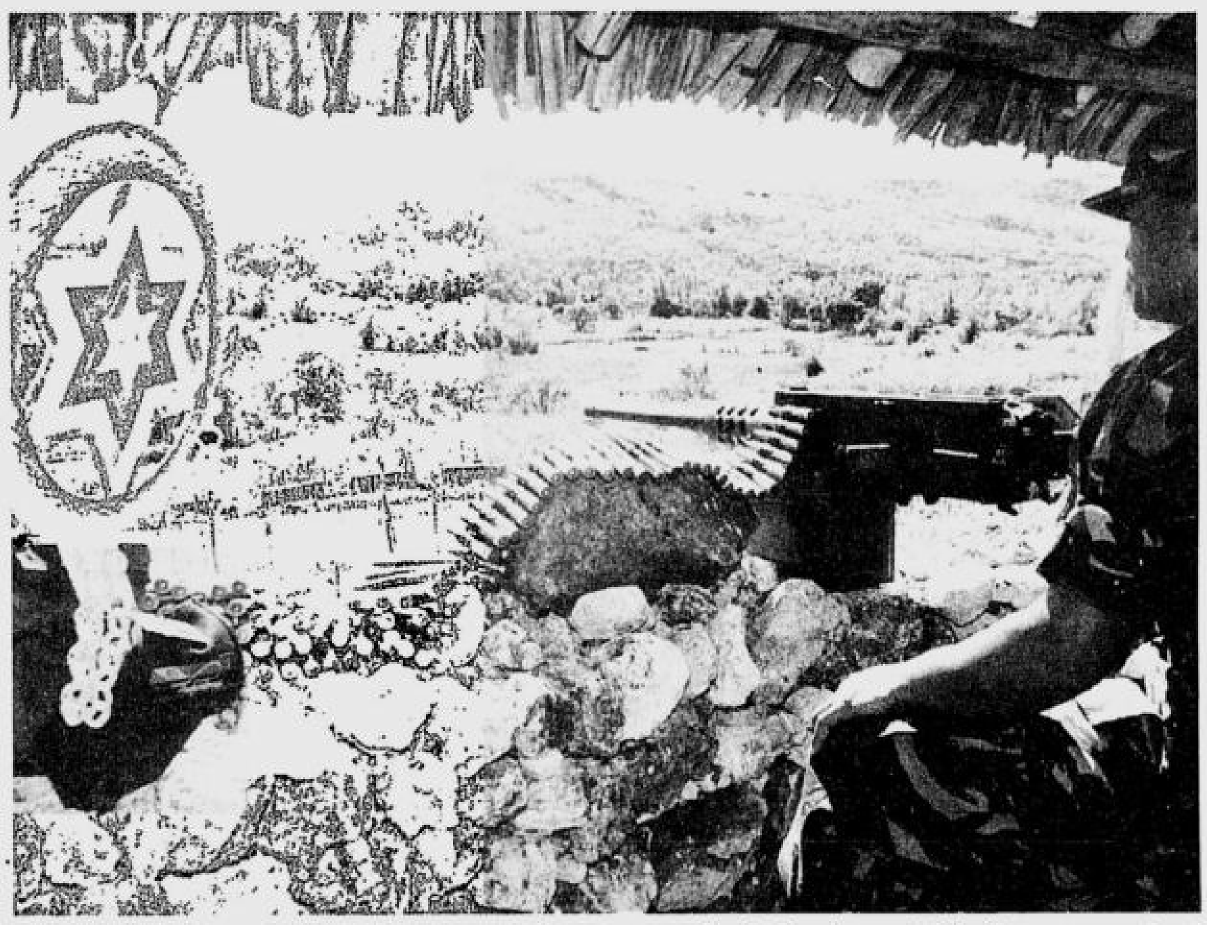
"The government does not plan to stay in San Miguel," Carranza pointed out. "What the PCGG wants to do is to generate money for agrarian reform and for the coconut industry," he said.

But the auction of the government shares would still have to involve an interim arrangement, PCGG Commissioner Victoria Avena said.

Carranza and Avena are the two commissioners handling the legal affairs of the PCGG.

A source said President Macapagal-Arroyo met with Cojuangco and the president of Kirin on Friday night. The President also asked PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac and Commissioners Carranza, Victoria Avena and Jorge Sarmiento to be present.

"This is a good signal being sent by the President," the source said, citing the President's invitation to the PCGG.



AN ARMY soldier mans a military detachment in Abra as a ceasefire declared separately by the government and communist rebels during the Christmas season takes effect. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Military braces for rebel attacks

THE MILITARY on Sunday said it was bracing for attacks next week when the underground Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) marks its 33rd founding anniversary, but stressed it would continue to observe a Christmas ceasefire.

Government troops have been asked to prepare contingency measures for any attacks by the party's armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), on Dec. 26, Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said.

"Traditionally, something happens on that date. We have notified our field commanders about this possibility," Adan told reporters.

But the AFP "will live up to its commitment not to conduct offensive operations, we will observe the ceasefire," he said.

Government offensives would only be carried out if the guerrillas attack civilians and vital installations, Adan said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a unilateral ceasefire from Dec. 10 to Jan. 6 in observance of Christmas in this predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

The NPA also declared its own month-long ceasefire beginning Saturday.

Adan said the NPA guerrillas have not violated their self-declared ceasefire yet, although they killed an Army captain and burned a passenger bus two days before it took effect.

The President suspended peace talks with the communists after the NPA assassinated two members of the House of Representatives in June.

The truce is seen as a measure to improve the atmosphere for a resumption of negotiations soon.

AFP

Pinoy hunk voted best int'l model

(From page A1)

Alexander Aquino, described as Manila's busiest male model, bested 35 other counterparts from across the globe in the 4th Mr. International pageant held on Saturday at the Indian state of Rajasthan.

Anibal Martignani of Venezuela was declared first runner-up, while Leroy Vissers of Holland was third runner-up.

According to organizers, the annual pageant is a tribute to the true spirit of an ideal man.

In an article published in the INQUIRER on Oct. 26, Lifestyle sub-editor Marge Enriquez described Aquino as "the most lusted newcomer in town."

"Just about every gay and gal who has met Aquino can't help but drool over him," Enriquez wrote.

According to her, it takes an interesting model like Aquino to bring life to men's wear.

Aquino got his striking Eurasian looks from his Irish-Korean mother and his Filipino father.

Enriquez wrote that Aquino was unlike some people in the industry who only have surface value.

His positivity glows that it easily opens doors to opportunities, according to her.

"He's got buoyancy, which makes an ordinary shoot seem amusing, and spontaneous warmth that makes him easy to work with. No wonder he easily bagged major campaigns and runway shows in the four months that he has been here," Enriquez said.

Like most American-bred Filipinos, however, this gentleman prefers blondes, Enriquez added.

ternational 200

ALEXANDER Aquino (center) of the Philippines, winner of the 4th Mr. International pageant, celebrates with second runner-up Leroy Vissers of Holland (right) and first runner-up Anibal Martignani of Venezuela in Udaipur, India, on Saturday. REUTERS

Arming of priests rejected

(From page A1)

selves are doing so on their own because they find it necessary to defend themselves against kidnap attempts," Fuentes said.

He said firearms were necessary for those assigned in troubled areas like Basilan, Sulu or Zamboanga.

It was not clear who brought up the idea of arming the priests, but Fr. Marcelino Benebaye, parish priest of Don Bosco here, confirmed that a number of them were now carrying firearms.

Some have even joined shooting clubs to improve their shooting skills for self-defense, Benebaye said.

However, Franco said this should not be the case, stressing that firearms represented violence.

He declined to identify the gun-wielding priests.

Among the first men of the cloth to pack pistols was Cirilo Nacorda, parish priest of Lamitan town in Basilan, who was abducted by the Abu Sayyaf in 1994 and freed after 61 days.

Nacorda returned to his church, but not without a .45 cal. pistol and at least seven bodyguards.

He said he was forced to carry a firearm to defend himself.

Kidnap gangs, including the Abu Sayyaf, have increasingly targeted clergy members over the past years. Since 1986, at least 16 members, including two nuns, have been seized by kidnappers.

The latest victim was Italian missionary Giuseppe Pierantoni, assistant parish priest of Dimataling, Zamboanga del Sur, who was abducted by rogue Moro guerrillas on Oct. 17.

At least four victims were killed by their captors.

The body of Fr. Ernesto Gordo, an Episcopal priest from Tagum, Davao del Norte, was found in March 1997 in Upi, Maguindanao.

Fr. Roel Gallardo was snatched by the Abu Sayyaf in Lantawan, Basilan, on March 20, 2000. His body was found in May.

Fr. Benjamin Inocencio, 42, chancellor of the Vicariate of Jolo, was killed on Dec. 28, 2000 by his would-be kidnappers.

Fr. Rufus Halley, parish priest of Malabang, Lanao del Sur, was killed on Aug. 28.

Bin Laden: How will his end come?

(From page A1)

REUTERS

ANTI-TALIBAN fighters watch several explosions from US bombings in the Tora Bora mountains in Afghanistan on Sunday. Hundreds of al-Qaida fighters have battled to the death in a last stand in eastern Afganistan, but their leader, Osama bin Laden, eluded the US dragnet, Afghan commanders said.

caves.

Afghan commanders said they believed their troops had Bin Laden trapped in one of the area's many caves.

The voice on the radio was identified as Bin Laden's through comparisons with his voice from several videotapes, according to the US official.

Americans have several ways to listen in on such radio transmissions, including gear carried by special operations forces and instruments on aircraft and satellites.

But other US officials say Bin Laden could have escaped from the Tora Bora area after making the intercepted radio transmissions—whose existence was first reported Saturday by the Washington Times.

Even so, evading detection would be difficult for Bin Laden.

The al-Qaida forces are concentrated in two valleys that cross the border into Pakistan to the south. Afghan tribal forces are moving in from the north, and Pakistani troops are guarding their border.

That puts the al-Qaida between "a hammer and an anvil," as the war's commander, Army Gen. Tommy Franks, put it.

Escaping would mean traveling through a dense forest and over high mountain ridges, probably either on foot or on a horse or donkey.

That would expose Bin Laden to US or Pakistani surveillance, which is scrutinizing the area around the clock. The surveillance includes instruments that detect body heat—which is much easier to spot when the ground is cold and snowy.

Bodyguards and aides who might accompany Bin Laden would make his party easier to spot.

Concealing a vehicle would be even harder, while air travel is hazardous over the mountains.

US officials say there is a chance that tunnels in the Tora Bora area could provide an escape route. US forces do not know how many tunnels there are or where their entrances and exits are, defense officials said.

Scenarios for Bin Laden's escape include the possibility that ships owned by the al-Qaida could spirit him far away if he makes it out of landlocked Afghanistan. US warships are checking merchant vessels on the chance they are carrying al-Qaida terrorists.

Either way

US President George W. Bush has professed indifference over how Bin Laden gets "justice," as long as he gets it. "Dead or alive—either way," he said.

The challenge of hunting al-Qaida fighters in caves is compounded by the difficulty of figuring out who is dead among the chambers.

Bodies found after a raid provide ready verification. But confirmation of Bin Laden's death could take some time if he is killed in a bomb strike that leaves behind mass casualties, or if he commits suicide in a secret or inaccessible area.

One distinctive body feature being kept in mind by US officials: Bin Laden's height, about 6 feet, 5 inches (1.95 meters).

Three senior al-Qaida leaders are known to be dead: Egyptians Mohammed Atef, Tariq Anwar al-Sayyid Ahmad and Muhammad Salah, all killed by US air strikes last month.

The United States learned of Atef initially through intercepted communications of people discussing his death. US officials confirmed reports that the wife and children of Bin Laden's aide, Ayman al-Zawahri, were killed, through a death notice in an Egyptian newspaper.

While officials realize some al-Qaida figures could try to fake death to escape, that behavior is not expected.

Wanted for slaughter

Recent history is uneven on the fate of men wanted for slaughter.

Ugandan strongman Idi Amin lives in exile in Saudi Arabia; Haiti's Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier went to France. Pol Pot, whose Khmer Rouge rained death and brutality on Cambodians, died in 1998, apparently of heart failure, in the custody of a ruthless rival.

As a consequence of military action, former Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega is in a US prison and former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic faces trial on charges of war crimes and genocide.

The United States has made clear it would not tolerate undisturbed exile for Bin Laden, blamed for the deaths of more than 3,000 people in the attacks on New York and Washington.

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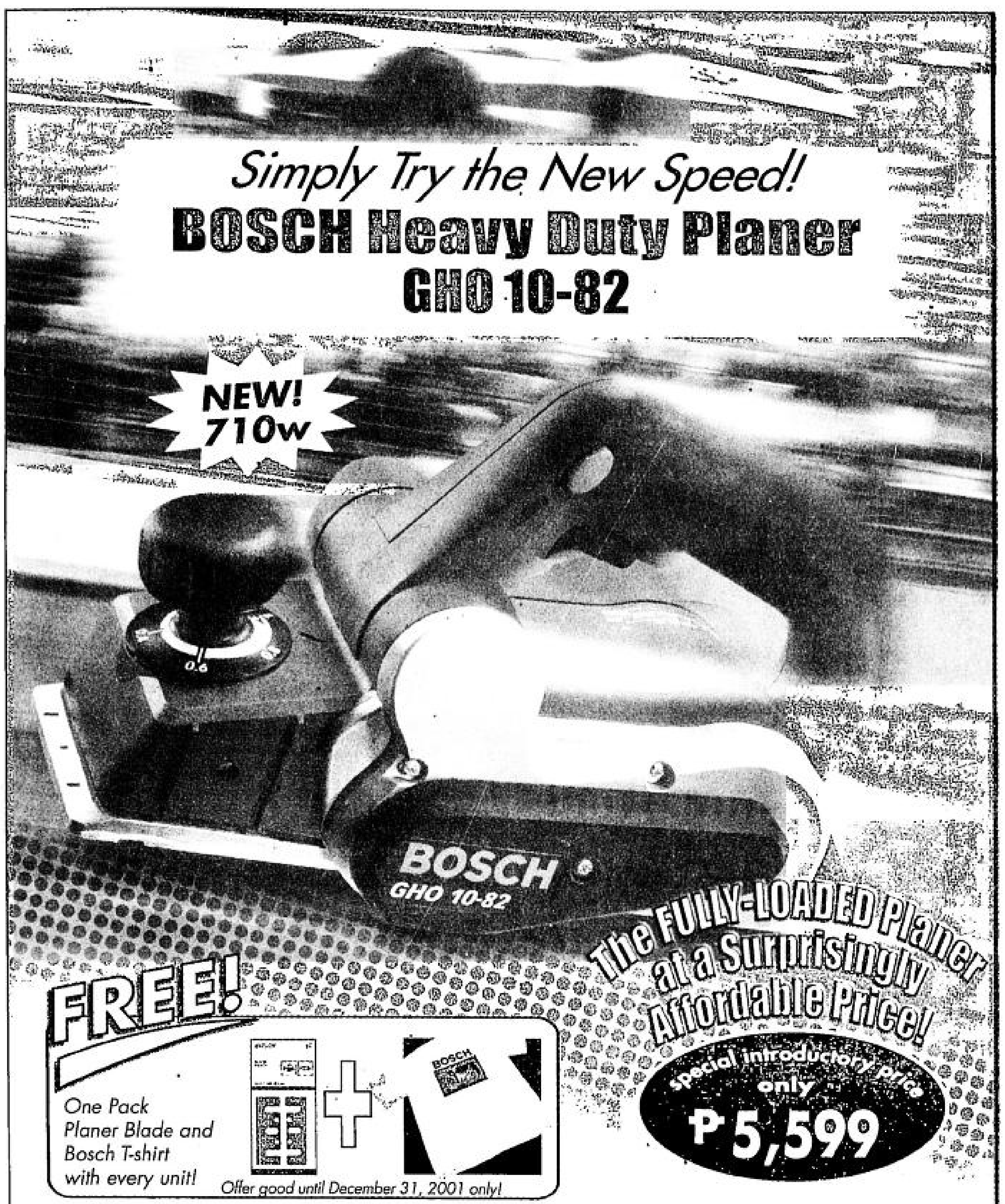
Ikelite-Aeris snares Anilao fishing crown

THE IKELITE-AERIS team topped the recent Dive Buddies Fish ID Scuba Diving Adventure held at the Eagle Point Resort in Anilao, Batangas. Ikelite-Aeris identified more fish species than the Beuchat-OSM team to win the event with 115 points.

Gift certificates were awarded to the winner by Tonton Francisco, manager of Eagle Point. The competition will be aired on Unlimited Diving over NBN Channel 4 tonight at 10:30. For more details, call 913-8605 or 0917-842-7240.



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ESGUERRA (left) hoists the Presidential Gold Cup as President Macapagal-Arroyo applauds.

JESS YUSON

Wind Blown repeats as PGC race titlist

By Edwin Villanueva

WIND Blown routed the field in the 29th running of the Presidential Gold Cup yesterday, becoming only the fourth horse to score a repeat win in the country's most prestigious race.

With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo watching in delight, Wind Blown had no trouble dispatching longshot Batangas Entry at the far turn before storming home to a six-length victory in front of a roaring crowd at the Santa Ana Park.

"*Masayang masaya ako lalo pa napanood ni* President Arroyo *ang panalo*," exclaimed sportsman-businessman Hermie Esguerra, who got the P1.5 million paycheck following Wind Blown's overwhelming triumph.

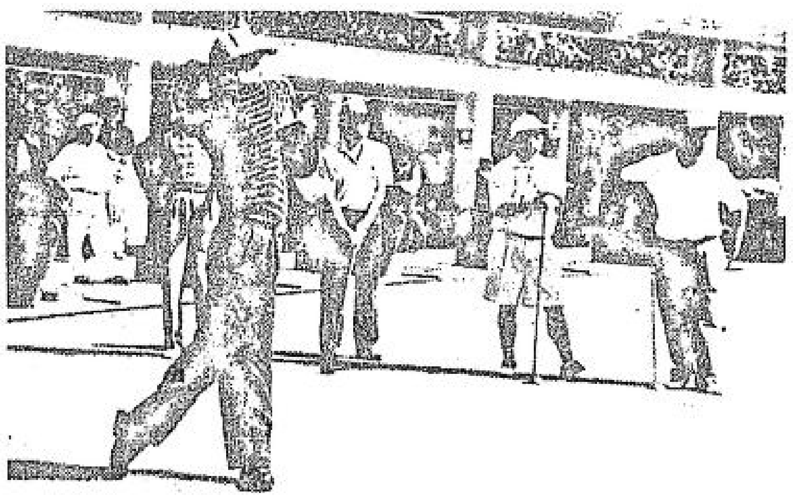
Esguerra accepted the PGC from President Arroyo and then later posed with her alongside Wind Blown, top Jockey of the Year contender Pat Dilema and trainer Antonio Alcasid Jr. at the winner's enclosure.

Paolo Mendoza's Batangas Entry, the Mitra Cup 2 Juvenile Colt champion who was handled yesterday by Miguel Recosana, hanged tough to nip Putch Puyat's Charlemagne for the P500,000 runner-up purse. Charlemagne settled for P250,000.

Wind Blown, whose next assignment is the Classic Open Championship on Dec. 29, negotiated the 2,050-meter race in 2:13 (29-24-27-25.5-27.5).

The win enabled the Sandy Javier-bred Wind Blown (Hazm-Wind in My Hair) to duplicate the back-to-back feats of Fair and Square (1982-82), Sun Dancer (1989-90) and Bulldozer (1996-97).

Sotto, Ti rule Chairman's Cup



MANILA Southwoods Golf and Country Club chair Robert John Lamb Sobrepeña (left) drives the ceremonial ball during the opening the 8th MSGCC Chairman's Cup Saturday in Carmona, Cavite. Also shown (from left) are Edward Dy, president of Mutli Global; George Blaylock, president of Diamond Motors Inc.; and Mel Dizon, vice president for marketing of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines.

EDGAR Ti scored a net 62 Saturday to bag the overall championship in the 2001 Chairman's Cup of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

Ti toured the Legends course with a gross 86 but took full advantage of his 24 handicap to best the record field of 280 members, guests and sponsors who competed in the 18-hole full handicap medal play held in honor of Manila Southwoods chair Robert John Lamb Sobrepena.

Sen. Tito Sotto shared the limelight with Ti for grabbing the overall gross trophy with a five over 77 at the tough Masters course—the other half of Southwoods' twin world-class championship layouts.

Toting a six handicap, Senator Sotto also won the guests and sponsors division with a net 71, the same score tallied by runner-up Caloy Coscolluela who lost due to a higher handicap.

Nelson de Villa, however, came out as the biggest winner for taking home the brand new Mitsubishi Lancer GSR donated by Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Inc. and dressed up by leading dealer Diamond Motors that was raffled off during the awarding ceremonies.

Roligon final on

EIGHT cocks with three points each will show their wares in the championship round of the 1st Luzviminda Slasher Cup Derby today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City.

Topping the first and second rounds were Gold Cup sa Texas by William Go, ASF/JPC-Showdown by P. Chua/Danny Ty, Dragon X-696 by. Abba, Black Stallion by Romy Tan/Ray/Showdown, Relentless by Emit San Juan.

Three cocks dominated the third round to join the five early qualifiers to the final round. They are LA-1 by Larry Amante, Santa Isabel by Maj. Bobby P. Doromal/Fritzola and RF-1 by Doromal.

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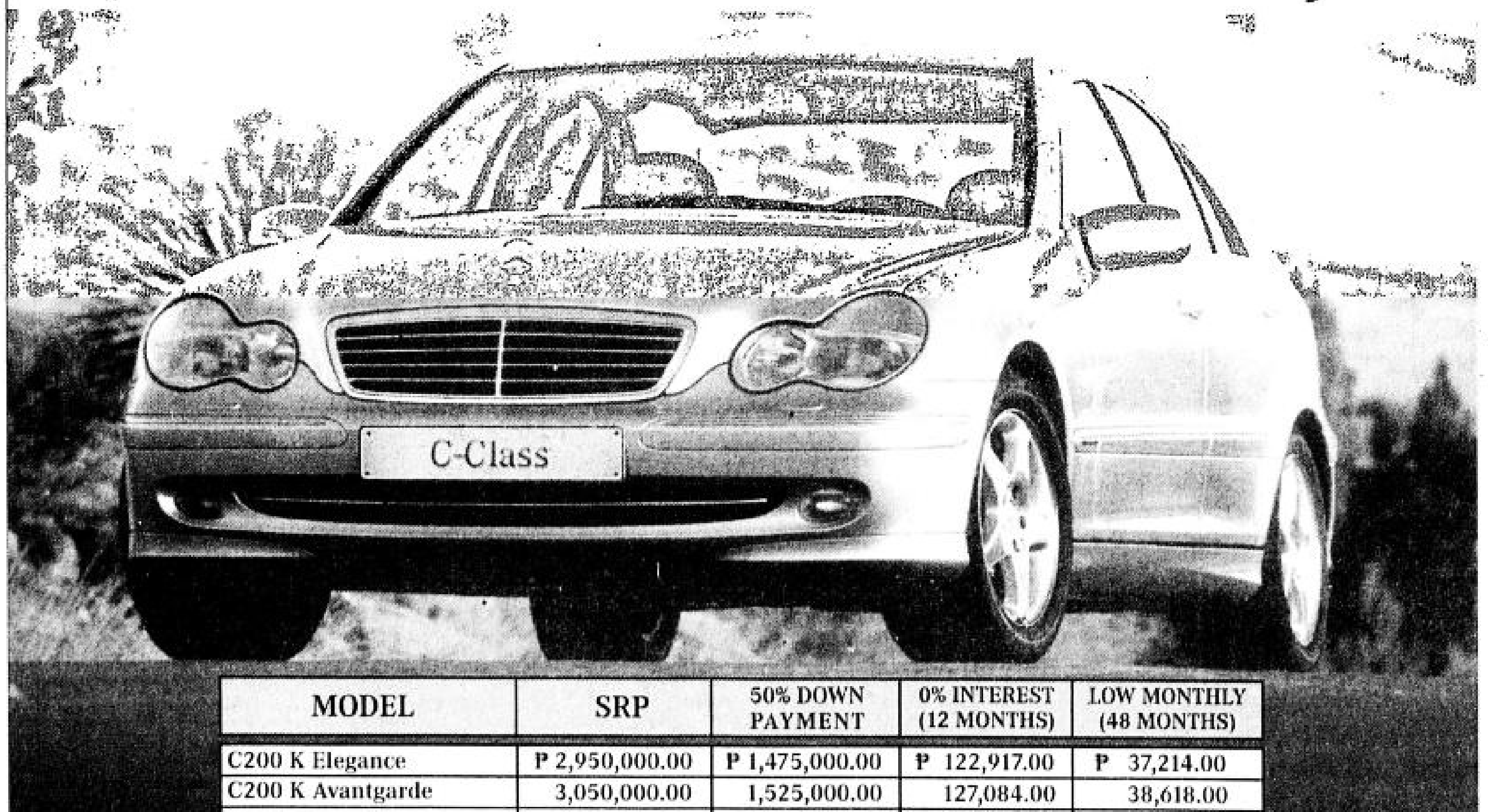

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Raiders clinch playoff spot

SAN DIEGO—Darrell Russell and William Thomas intercepted Doug Flutie's passes to kill San Diego drives and the Oakland Raiders beat the Chargers 13-6 in a wild finish to clinch their second straight AFC West title. The Raiders (10-3) became the first team to clinch a playoff spot. The Chargers (5-9) lost their seventh straight game. *AP*

SPORTS

Al S. Mendoza, Editor ▨ **Edwin M. Villanueva**, Assistant Editor

Sta. Lucia champ at last

Edwin shines

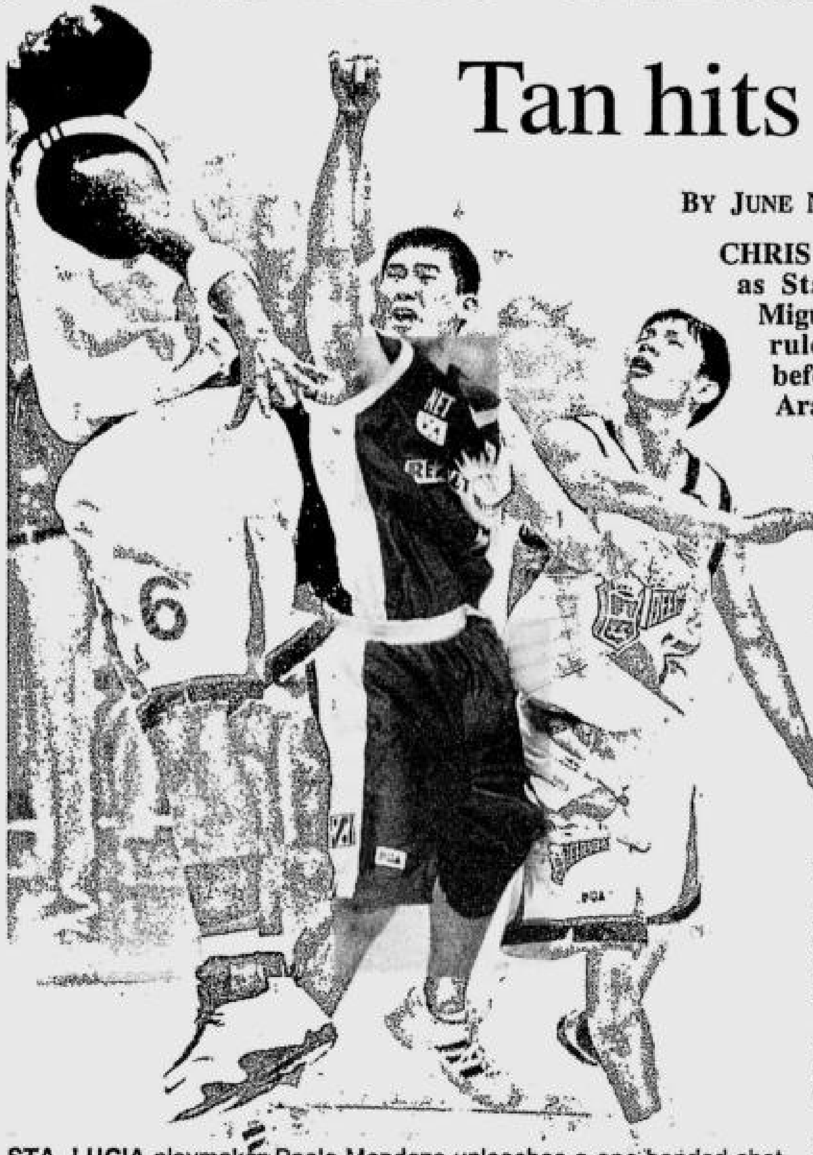
EDWIN Olivarez Jr. scoreda rousing win yesterday to lead the winners in the unisex 10 years and under division of the fourth Armando Manzano Memorial age-group tennis championship at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Olivarez, grandson of former Philta president and Parañaque Mayor Pablo Olivarez, drubbed John Quinatadcan, 6-1, 6-0.

76ers end NBA skid

CLEVELAND—Allen Iverson shot 18-for-29 and scored 40 points Saturday night to help the Philadelphia 76ers snap their seven-game losing streak with a 94-91 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Complete Results: Boston 106, Charlotte 97; Philadelphia 94, Cleveland 91; San Antonio 100, Utah 80; Miami 76, Houston 73; Atlanta 80, Chicago 79; Milwaukee 115, Indiana 95; Dallas 125, Minnesota 117; Denver 106, Phoenix 98; Portland 117, Orlando 106; Golden State 93, Memphis 84. *AP*



STA. LUCIA playmaker Paolo Mendoza unleashes a one-handed shot off San Miguel Beer's Olsen Racela (right) and Dorian Peña in the first quarter. —ROMY HOMILLADA

Tan hits winning triple

BY JUNE NAVARRO

CHRIS Tan made the shot of his life as Sta. Lucia Realty beat San Miguel Beer, 75-72, last night to rule the PBA Governors Cup before a delirious crowd at the Araneta Coliseum.

With 3.3 seconds left, the 6-foot Tan unleashed a triple that hit nothing but net as the Realtors finally ended a nine-year title drought since joining the league in 1993.

"I can't believe Cris took that shot. He just proved to everybody that he truly belongs in the PBA," said Sta. Lucia coach Norman Black of his stepson.

Prior to the match, Tan shot only five points and went 0-of-8 from the three-point area in the entire best-of-seven series.

Last night, Tan heated things up, firing two crucial triples to finish with eight points and two rebounds.

In winning his 10th coaching title, Black moved alongside Alaska's Tim Cone with the second most number of titles behind the legendary Baby Dalupan's 15.

He also became the fifth coach to win championships with different teams after Dalupan, Tommy Manotoc, Ed Ocampo and Yeng Guiao.

Ironically, Black won his first nine titles in a coaching career that spanned for almost 15 years as San Miguel Beer's bench tactician from 1986-1996.

The victory also gifted majority of the Realtors their first taste of a championship title except for Marlou Aquino and Mike Orquillias, who had seen action for 1997 Commissioner's Cup champion Gordon's Gin.

The Realtors, working behind an efficient offensive layout, momentarily broke loose in the second quarter as Paolo Mendoza, Dennis Espino and Damien Owens sparkled.

Espino and Mendoza alternated in attacking the hoop, while Owens added few defensive stops as the Realtors built a 30-19 cushion with still eight minutes remaining before halftime.

Danny Seigle and Lamont Strothers then answered with three-point plays each to keep the Beermen within reach, 28-32, but Gerard Francisco sank a putback and a triple inside three minutes to widen the Realtors' gap.

Meanwhile, a rent-a-car driver from Mandaluyong City gifted himself a fortune after winning the P870,750 jackpot in the Coat Saver Miracle Shot contest during halftime.

Joselito De Leon, 33, pocketed the cash bonanza after he made all of his four attempts in varying distances, the last of which was fired a few meters before midcourt.

The scores:

STA. LUCIA 75—Espino 17, Owens 14, Aquino 14, Francisco 13, Tan 8, Mendoza 6, Belano 3, Del Rosario 0.

SAN MIGUEL 72—Seigle 25, Strothers 25, Ildefonso 15, Racela 7, Lago 0, Peña 0, Belasco 0, Victoria 0.

Quarters: 25-18, 42-33, 58-50, 75-72.

Slashers stay alive

GAME WEDNESDAY:
USLS Gym Bacolod City
5 p.m.—Negros vs LBC Batangas

BACOLOD CITY—Dino Aldeguer struck at the right time and Reynel Hugnatan sustained a game-long brilliance as they lifted Negros to an 80-71 victory over LBC Batangas last night in Game Three of their MBA National Finals at the University of St. La Salle Gym here.

Coming from the bench, Aldeguer sparked an eight-point wind-up that pushed the Slashers ahead in the third quarter and then carried over his heroics in the fourth as the Slashers cut down the Blades lead to 2-1 in the best-of-five series.

Hugnatan, on the other hand, bucked an aching ankle to finish with game-high 20 points and 20 rebounds and share best player honors with Aldeguer.

The Slashers try to level the series in Game Four also slated at the USLS Gym on Wednesday. A victory by the Slashers would send the Finals back to Lipa City for the deciding Game Five on Friday. *Roy Luarca*

Scores:

NEGROS 79—Hugnatan 20, Aldeguer 15, White 8, Tierra 8, Benedicto 8, Dela Rosa 7, Ferriols 5, Cardel 3, Huelar 3, Ignacio 2, Madrid 1, Primero 0.

LBC BATANGAS 71—Sanders 19, Adducul 14, Compton 14, Laure 12, Serrano 5, Rivera 5, Corbin 2, Espinosa 0,Martin 0, Ramirez 0.

Quarters: 17-13, 36-36, 53-51, 60-71.

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Garcia bags top plum in TGA Jungolf launch

A STEADY-HITTING club champion, a young congressman, and a ladies circuit standout made it to the winners' roster of The Golf Authority Junior Golfers Club's launching tournament recently at the Wack Wack west course.

Raffy Garcia, the spearhead of Federation League titlist Forest Hills where he reigns as club champion, bagged top honors with his gross of even-par 72 and a System 36 net of 68 on the strength of his four birdies.

Rep. Jack Duavit, who took over from his father Gilberto the Rizal seat in Congress, won Class B with his net 71 while Rio Co, a big factor in Sta. Elena's hold of power in the ladies scene, clinched the ladies division with her 70.

Also shining in the 18-hole event which had Bingo Bonanza as the presentor and Herma Group, SGV, Splash Manufacturing, Mandaue Realty, Lee Designs, Samitrade and Alcatel Phils. as major sponsors were Manny Cabili, the windsurfing standout who edged Alvee Benitez and Claro Ben Lim for the Class A plum and Miko Alejandro whose 70 put him three strokes clear of Katrina Gonzales in the junior division.

Organized by the TGA headed by noted swing guru Bong Lopez, the event also got the support of Pampanga Vice Gov. Mikey Arroyo, 357 Boracay, Unilever, Belo Medical Group, Comworks, FGL Hotdog on Stick, PLDT, Smart, Long Stem Flowers, Maxima Equipment, MIT Air, Mitsubishi, Nikel Steel, Nestle, David Ty, Alex Lichaytoo, Bacchus International, Manny Abelardo, Nestle, Tony Yap, Minola, Mead Johnson, Katya, Margarita dela Cruz, Toy Kingdom, Cocolife, Phil. Alliance, GLY Dev't., Roland Ramos, Premier Productions, M-Zet TV Productions, Philtrust Bank and Excellasia.

Winner of the special awards were Sherman Yap for the nearest the pin on No. 3, Claro Ben Lim for his 295-yard drive on the 18th and Kit Lopez for the most accurate shot.

NBA games on NBN, Solar

SOLAR Entertainment Corp. will telecast three blockbuster NBA games on NBN-4 and the Solar cable channel (Skycable Channel 24, Homecable Channel 17) this week, including one game that features comebacking superstar Michael Jordan against the spectacular Vince Carter.

Solar recently acquired from the NBA the exclusive television rights to air NBA games in the Philippines.

Kevin Garnett and the Minnesota Timberwolves battled the Dallas Mavericks last night on NBN-4.

It's Jordan against Carter today live at 9 a.m. (replay at 8 p.m.) on the Solar cable channel, when the Washington Wizards face the Toronto Raptors for the first time this season.

On Thursday (Dec. 20), Central Division rivals Indiana Pacers and Toronto Raptors clash on NBN-4 at 10 p.m.

Holyfield denied 5th title

MASHANTUCKET, Connecticut—Evander Holyfield was denied a fifth heavyweight championship when his third fight against John Ruiz was called a draw after 12 rounds of mostly mauling and clutching.

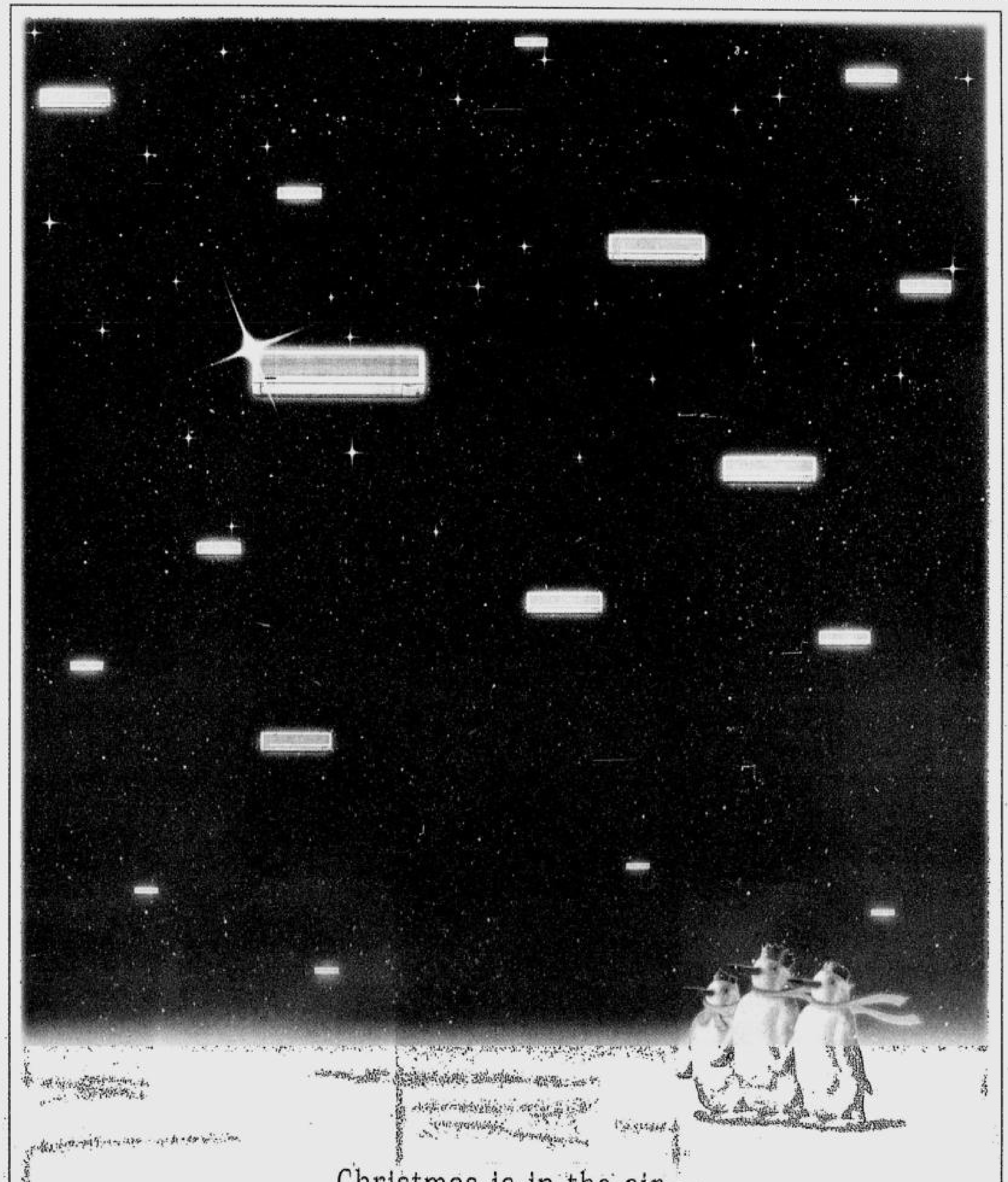
Although Ruiz kept the WBA title before a partisan crowd, the draw verdict was roundly booed in a bingo hall Saturday night at the Foxwoods Resort and Casino.

It was a setback for the 39-year-old Holyfield, who wants to become the undisputed champion. After the fight, he again said that was his goal.

It is unknown what the future holds for Holyfield, but Ruiz must make a WBA mandatory defense against Kirk Johnson of Canada in March. *AP*

9-BALL TOURNEY

Billiards superstar Efren "The Magician" Reyes (left) shows his cue stick to Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos during the recent opening of the Mayor Benhur Abalos Best of the Best 9-Ball tournament. The event, organized by the Mandaluyong Cue Artists Association, will end on Feb. 10, 2002.



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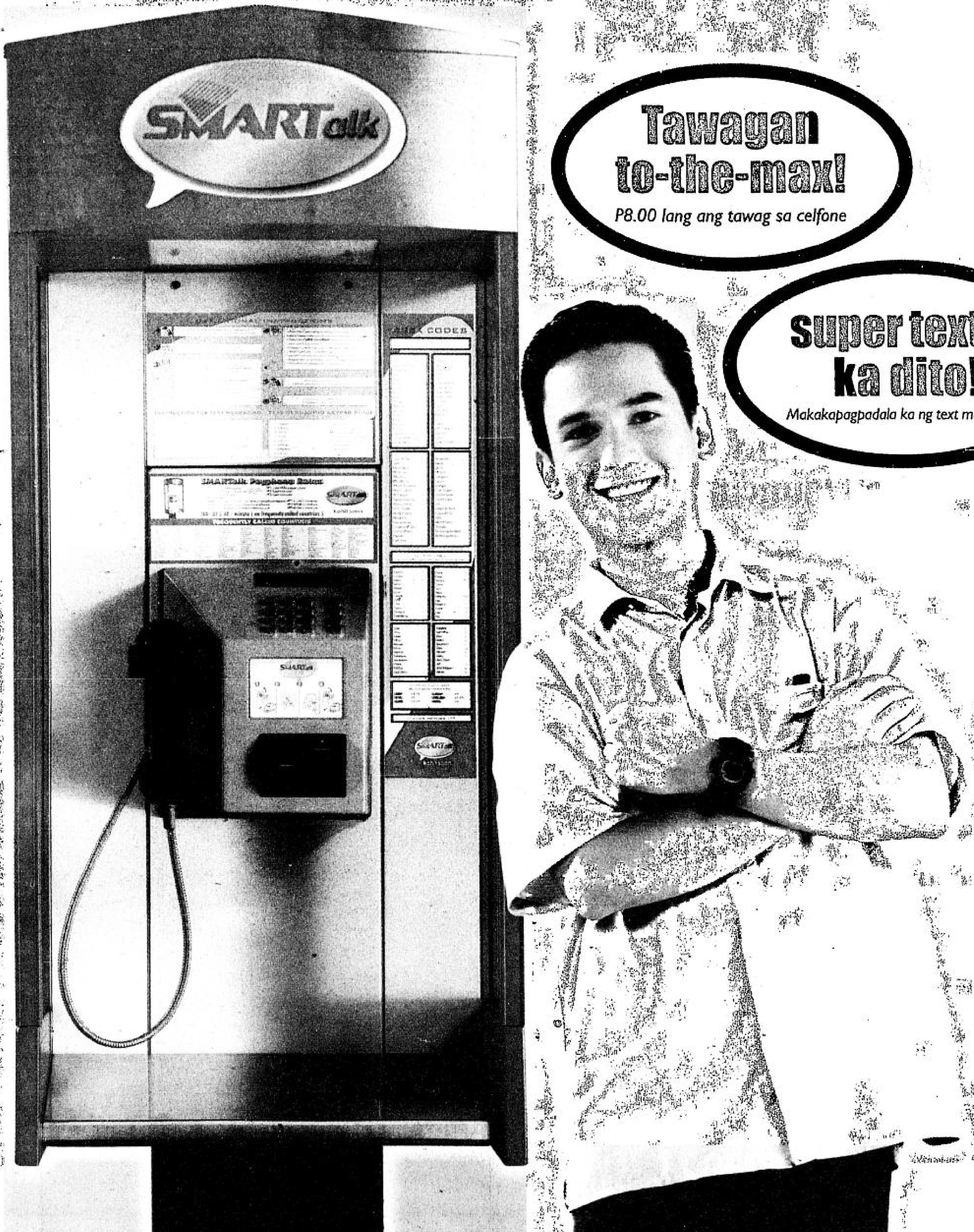

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LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

NBI bares fresh Nida slay twist

TANTOCO

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

ON THE 40th day of Nida Blanca's death, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) yesterday announced another breakthrough in the investigation of her brutal killing.

The NBI claimed it has witnesses who saw Blanca with a lesbian-looking woman, who looked like Blanca's best friend Candelaria Tantoco, on the night she was murdered.

NBI spokesperson Rick Diaz said the bureau has "more than one" witness who saw Blanca with a lesbian at Casino Filipino "between 10 to 11 p.m." on Nov. 6.

The actress was found dead inside her car at Atlanta Centre building in San Juan the next morning.

A source at the NBI told the INQUIRER that the tomboy's description matched Tantoco's features, "95 percent up, "adding that the bureau has a sketch of the lesbian-looking woman.

"We already had them (the witnesses) for a long time (for two weeks). They were even able to describe Nida's clothes without us telling them about it," the source said.

He said the witnesses are "casino regulars," adding that the casino's security cameras apparently did not capture Blanca and her companion.

But while the NBI had interviewed Tantoco, she now refuses to take a lie-detector test with the bureau, Diaz said.

"We are now wondering why these three—Tantoco, (Elena) Dela Paz, and (Rod) Strunk—are defensive and evasive when we ask them questions," Diaz said.

"They are the aggrieved party. They are the ones who should eagerly help us solve this case," he added.

NBI investigators are wondering why Strunk, Blanca's husband, had his lawyers with him when he went to the bureau last week for an interview.

NBI director Reynaldo Wycoco even criticized Strunk's lawyers for answering the investigators' questions instead of just letting their client speak during the interview.

NBI/ A26

'Akyat Bahay' pounces on Mike Arroyo mouthpiece

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

A FEMALE lawyer, identified as the spokesperson of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, is the latest victim of the "Akyat Bahay" gang.

Patricia Bunye, a lawyer, lost P60,000 in cash and personal belongings when three robbers sneaked into her house at 146 Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati on Saturday morning, police said.

Bunye was unharmed and lost no other belongings, according to Makati police investigators.

The victim was asleep when the suspects entered through a window near the back portion of her house around 3 a.m., investigation showed.

She woke up around 5 a.m. when she heard movements outside of her bedroom, police said.

When she went out to check she saw that her window was open and her cash, laptop computer, and other belongings missing, police said.

Neighbors later told investigators that they saw three men sneaking out of Bunye's house early that morning.

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X-rated film the President must see

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HE could not go home again, explained the man seated with other reactors on the half-lit stage. He identified himself as Bernard Montoya, survivor of an attack by heavily armed soldiers.

Montoya said he's a poor farmer from Occidental Mindoro. After the military decided to tag him as a member of the New People's Army, heavily armed soldiers one evening trespassed, barged into his place and started shooting indiscriminately.

He was hit but survived with three bullets still lodged in his arm, close to the left wrist.

His wife was hit in the buttocks, her pelvic bone shattered by the barrage. She has remained in bed ever since in an undisclosed place in Metro Manila.

The survivor, with a strong, sunburnt face, explained he had not gone too far in school. He said he could not really articulate his grievances. But it was easy to believe what he was narrating in a deep, even voice.

He was there, he said, after he decided to come out and help bare atrocities being perpetrated by the military on helpless people, mostly poor, innocent farmers, in the countryside.

* * *

The affair was the showing on Dec. 7 of a 45-minute video-documentary "Alingawngaw ng mga Bala" at the Miriam College in Quezon City detailing rampant human rights violations under the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Sa loob lamang ng sampung buwang pananatili ng gubyernong Arroyo," says a lead-in text on the screen, "mahigit na sa 147 kaso ng paglabag sa karapatang pangtao ang naitala sa Timog Katagalugan."

That number, 147, exceeded the same volume of violations in the same period under the Estrada administration, the text explains.

A subsequent update detailed by Inquirer reporter Agnes Donato said the number of human rights violations involving police and the military has risen to 231 in succeeding months.

A total of 1,306 persons, continues the text on the screen, were injured, 20 communities and 4,4412 families were affected in the atrocities, as catalogued by the Karapatan-Timog Katagalugan.

* * *

The documentary, throbbing with the starkest footage this side of hell,

bares the savagery and one-sidedness of the government's supposed campaign to bring peace in the countryside.

The film, to put it mildly, is a cry. But it's far from being a tearjerker.

The fast-paced documentary leaves the viewer gnashing his teeth, screaming deep within.

There's no suspenseful plot. Everything is predictably gory. The mindless, defenseless execution of civilians, often hogtied, their bloated, discolored bodies left to rot on the roadside, dominates the presentation.

The howling pain of bereavement, caused on family members of the victims, keeps popping up.

One poor father offers momentary shelter and simple dinner to a group of men one drizzly evening. The military commander learns of the otherwise commendable gesture. But because the passing men happened to be suspected NPA men, the poor father was next invited for interrogation. He reluctantly joined soldiers who fetched him from his hut. The next time his grieving family heard of the kind-hearted man, he was already dead, his body dumped on a grass patch.

It's not only heartless militarization, but the senseless uprooting of poor families from regions of their birth and origin, that gets exposed.

As always, the victims are left to wonder why the military has to do the atrocity on them whose only sin, it seemed, was being very poor.

The film gets an ovation as soon as the credits start to float on the screen.

* * *

Rep. Satur Ocampo, ageless freedom fighter and a long-time political prisoner under the hated Marcos regime, was quick to single out the strongest points of the documentary.

He pointed to a sickening contrast: the helplessness of the victims and the loud, devil-may-care attitude of the suspected military executioners.

Alingawngaw, produced by the Southern Tagalog-Exposure (People's Center for Progressive Media), could indeed border on the subversive—depending on which side of the human rights turf the viewer stands.

But what it has singularly achieved was bare the bloodied, battered heart of poor victims who have been relegated to hungry, harassed refugees right in their homeland.

The fact-finding missions continue, says a Task Force Tangol Karapatan leaflet. Relief and medical missions are conducted in aide of the "internal refugees."

Other than at Miriam's College, Alingawngaw had had screenings before students at the University of the Philippines, the Philippine Christian University-Taft, St. Scholastica's College, Manila.

It's not for the faint of heart. In fact, the gory, starkly unforgiving details could spoil the Christmas feast.

But Alingawngaw, our hats off to the anonymous filmmaker, is an x-rated film the President must dare see.

The better for her to know that a more evil form of terrorism is being perpetrated away from Mindanao.

Pasig reclaiming portions of Makati, Mandaluyong

By Nelson F. Flores

NOT content with its legal battle against the Municipality of Cainta, the Pasig City local government is out to claim territories it claims to have lost to neighboring Mandaluyong and Makati.

This was disclosed yesterday by lawyer Ricardo Castillo, Pasig City chief legal officer, in an interview with the INQUIRER. But he added that the claim would have to wait until its fight with Cainta is over.

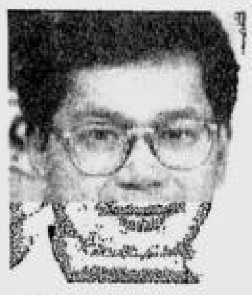
Pasig City is an industrial metropolitan area along the Pasig River, a historic waterway which it shares with Makati, Mandaluyong and Manila.

Castillo explained that the city's resources are currently concentrated on its legal battle against Cainta, hence, the other territorial claims could wait.

He added that there are at least 18 pending legal suits against Cainta.

Castillo said Pasig is currently resisting a lawsuit by the municipal government of Cainta. He said Cainta is appropriating portions of Barangay Kanangalan, Sta. Lucia, Santolan and Manggahan.

EUSEBIO



ABALOS

"However, our position is, since Congress has not made changes in the city's current boundaries, there is no legal basis for the claims being made by Cainta," Castillo said.

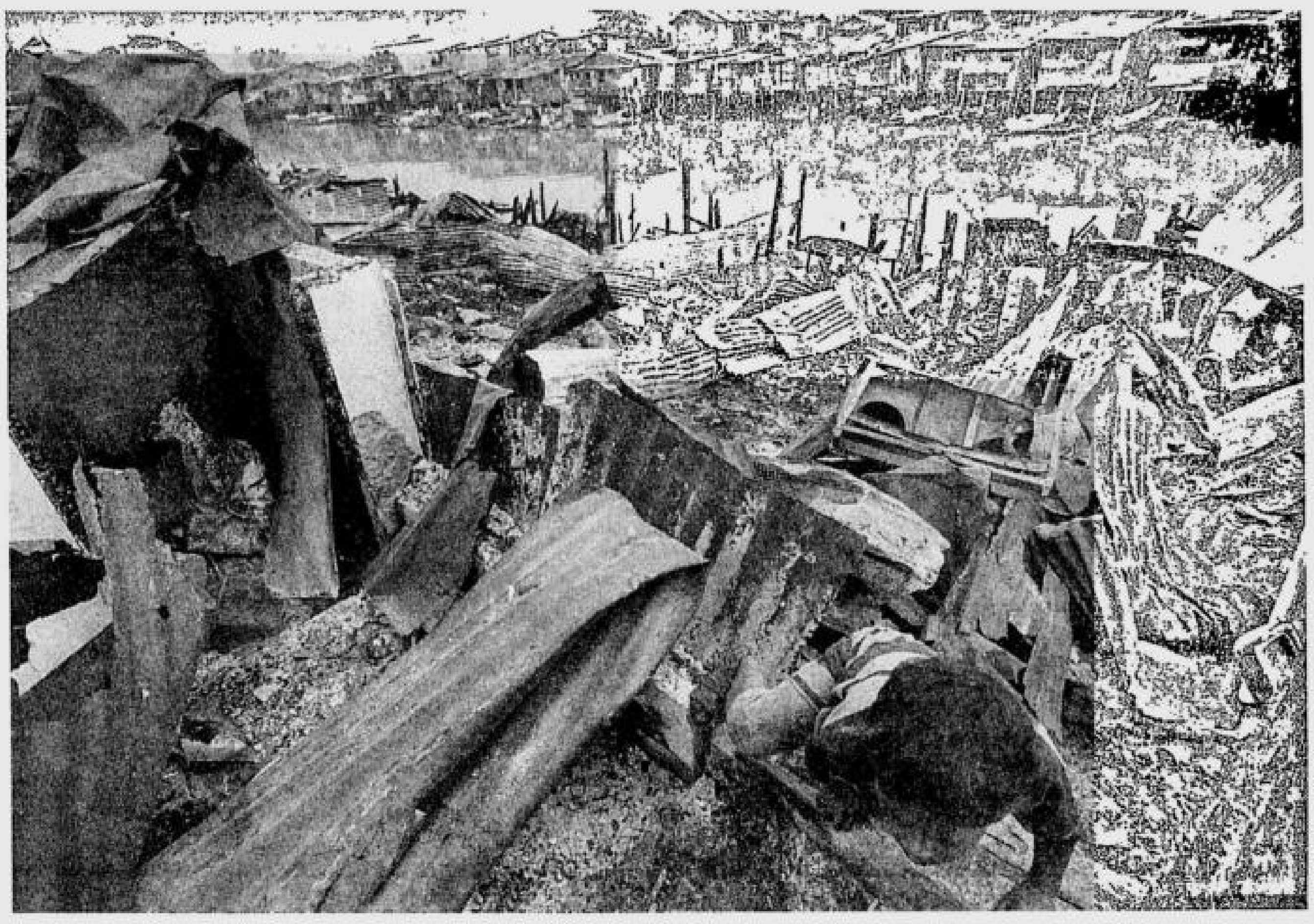
Regarding its claim against Mandaluyong City, Castillo said it is the position of the city government that the boundary between Pasig and Mandaluyong should be Edsa, formerly known as Highway 54.

"But unfortunately, Mandaluyong has encroached and limited the Pasig border where St. Francis Church is now located. (Mandaluyong) has claimed the side where most of the commercial centers now stand, like Edsa Shangri-La Plaza," Castillo said.

Regarding its claim against Makati City, Castillo said they have disputed its several barangays where they have common boarders, but did not elaborate.

Meanwhile, Mandaluyong Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. said he welcomes any legal move coming from Pasig City, adding it would be better for both sides to settle all disputes as soon as possible.

Abalos however stressed that the city government of Mandaluyong has not encroached on any territory of Pasig City.



AFGHANISTAN RP-STYLE

A BOY combs an area that resembles a bombed-out landscape in Afghanistan, where the family shanty once stood. Thursday's fire razed the boy's home, and 600 others, in Parañaque. A woman reportedly threw a lighted lamp at her husband sparking the 4-hour blaze.

JESS YUSON

NBI . . .

(From page A25)

Dela Paz, Blanca's long-time secretary, flunked the NBI's lie-detector test on Friday.

"The reactions in her body during the test indicated that deception was involved," Diaz said.

He added that the bureau is conducting a thorough background check of Dela Paz's family and relatives.

Diaz said Dela Paz was asked about the sworn statement her grandson radio reporter Red Cruz, of dzAR "Angel Radio," gave the NBI on Thursday.

In his statement, Cruz said he was able to talk to Dela Paz in the morning of Nov. 7 and got the information that two men murdered Blanca.

Dela Paz admitted to investigators that she did talk to Cruz but insisted that she only told him that Blanca was killed, Diaz said.

But in his radio report, Cruz said in Filipino that one or two men repeatedly stabbed Blanca. He even mentioned the time Blanca was killed, "between 3 to 4 a.m.," which forensic experts would later confirm as the actress' time of death.

Cruz said he talked to Dela Paz through a cellular phone and quoted her as saying that none of Blanca's belongings were missing, which investigators also affirmed later.

Cruz aired the report around 8:25 a.m. on Nov. 7, or a few minutes after Blanca's body was found at the Atlanta Centre Building in San Juan.

But Diaz said no one could have known, at that point, the time and method of Blanca's death since the police Scene of the Crime Operations (Soco) team had not opened the actress' car. The Soco team did that only at around 9 a.m.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 17, 2001
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: **Gen 49:2, 8-10**
Gospel: **Mt 1:1-17**

This is the document of the origins of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (their mother was Tamar), Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron of Aram. Aram was the father of Aminadab, Aminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon.

Salmon was the father of Boaz. His mother was Rahab. Boaz was the father of Obed. His mother was Ruth. Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of David, the king. David was the father of Solomon. His mother had been Uriah's wife.

Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Then came the kings: Abijah, Asaph, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah.

Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

After the deportation to Babylon Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel and Salathiel of Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud, Abiud of Eliakim, and Eliakim of Azor. Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, and Akim the father of Eliud. Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar of Matthan, and Matthan of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and from her came Jesus who is called the Christ—the Messiah.

There were then fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, and fourteen generations from David to the deportation to Babylon, and fourteen generations from the deportation to Babylon to the birth of Christ.

Commentary

The Gospel of Matthew begins by clearly showing us that Jesus is the son of David and the son of Abraham. This means he is the son of the promise. A promise which has been maintained through the centuries, occasionally amidst obstacles. It is an account with some incests and adulteries. It doesn't matter. The power of God is greater than people's miseries and his desire for salvation is more powerful than our capacity to immerse ourselves constantly in life's tribulations. Our God has remained faithful to his promises through all generations. And now, as Christmas approaches, the time has come for us to celebrate this!

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (CONSTITUTIONAL LAW—BILL OF RIGHTS)/ REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—Article III, Section 14 of the 1987 Constitution mandates that no person shall be held liable for a criminal offense without due process of law. It further provides that in all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall be informed of the nature and cause of accusation against him and shall enjoy the right to be heard by himself and counsel. Similarly, the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure, as amended, which took effect on Dec. 1, 2000, provides that in all criminal prosecutions, it is the right of the accused to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation against him. To convict an accused for an offense not alleged in the complaint or information violates such right. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Puno, People v. Valdesancho, G.R. Nos. 137051-52, May 30, 2001]

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Marquez rapped on 'tax pressure'

By Abigail L. Ho

"IT'S triple taxation for us."

Ninoy Aquino International Airport General Manager Edgardo Manda complained that the Parañaque government is pressuring them to pay real estate taxes they should not even be paying because it is not part of the airport charter.

Manda said that, aside from paying corporate income taxes, the airport also remits 20 percent of its revenues to the national government.

But Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez shrugged this off and said Naia should still settle with the local government its real estate tax es amounting to around P650 million or face the prospect of being auctioned off.

Manda said the case—whether the airport should remit anything to the local government—is already with the Court of Appeals.

"The case is already in court, so we should just respect the process," Manda said. "Our position is to let the court decide."

In a meeting with Marquez two or three months ago, the Naia chief said they agreed to just wait for the Court of Appeals' decision.

Manda said he was surprised when Marquez came out with statements in media while the case is still in court.

"It's important that all concerned agencies—those who have claims—sit down and discuss this because it's a matter of national interest," Manda said. "We're all in government so we should try to find a solution to this rather than go to media. What's more important is the national interest."

He said he wanted to call a meeting with Marquez, Pasay Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad Jr., the Department of Justice and the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel.

"But now that they have already expressed their sentiments through media, I may have a hard time calling for a meeting," he said.

Manda also wondered why Marquez was putting that much pressure on the airport to remit taxes when Parañaque had jurisdiction on only one-third of the airport.

The remaining two-thirds of the Naia property is within Pasay City's jurisdiction, Manda said. Pasay also wants Naia to remit P750 million in real estate taxes.

Manda said the basis for the two local governments' claims were a Supreme Court decision compelling the Mactan Cebu International Airport to remit taxes to the Cebu City government.

But Manda explained that the Supreme Court decision does not apply to Naia as its case is totally different from that of the Cebu airport.

"Since 1982, when Naia became an authority, it was not stated in our charter that we had to pay local government taxes," he said. "We're already mandated to remit 20 percent of our revenues to the national government, which is what we have been doing."

Last year, Manda said they remitted over P1.2 billion to the national government.

NEW MUTYA
Lovely ladies of Valenzuela pose with winning smiles with Mayor Bobit Carlos (3rd from left) and Mrs. Rita Carlos (3rd from right) at the crowning ceremonies of the local beauty quest. Winner is high school student Rovie Lyn A Cabigques (center).

A new 'Mutya' for Valenzuela

ROVIE Lyn A. Cabigquez, 17, a 4th year high school student, was crowned Mutya ng Valenzuela 2001 on Dec. 8 at the Bahayang Pag-asa Sports Complex in Maysan, Valenzuela City.

Cabigquez also bagged the Best in Long Gown and Designer of the Night awards.

Valenzuela Mayor Bobbit Carlos and his wife, Mrs. Rita Carlos, president of Valenzuela Tourism Council, crowned the First Mutya ng Valenzuela.

First runner-up May Joy C. Fortes of Barangay Marulas received the Best in Casual Wear Award.

Best in Swimsuit and Best in Regional Costume awards went to second runner-up Gretzen C. Casimiro of Barangay Canumay.

Mary Jane V. dela Cruz of Barangay Lingunan is the Third runner-up and Miss Friendship.

Mutya Kristina S. Capa of Barangay Maysan is fourth runner-up.

Judges were Rene Salud, Aureo Alonzo, Ogee Atos, Julio Diaz, Wilma Doesn't, Myrna Yao, Joshua Zamora.

RAM head wants 'monopoly deal,' Abenina claims

By Alcuin Papa

LAND Transportation Office chief retired general Edgardo Abenina lashed back at his former comrades at the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansa Makabansa and accused its leader, Commodore Domingo Calajate, of trying to cut a money-making deal at the LTO.

Abenina said on Friday Calajate approached him last May to ask if the RAM leader can control the "monopoly" of car insurance policies to be issued to newly registered vehicles.

"(Calajate) wanted to enter into a deal regarding the car insurance," Abenina said. "But I told him that is not possible."

Abenina said this incident and others involving other personalities could be the reason why a smear campaign is being waged against him.

"These are the people who asked favors from me but whom I turned down," he said.

The Inquirer twice called Calajate at his RAM office in Makati on Friday but was told he was not around.

Instead, RAM spokesperson Col. Reynaldo Samaco told the Inquirer that Calajate would not have asked such a favor from Abenina.

"Commodore Calajate is a straight person," Samaco said. "I don't think he will go into deals that will tarnish the organization (RAM)."

Samaco added Abenina is already in a "tight situation" as President Macapagal-Arroyo is reportedly set to replace Abenina.

"From what we heard, there is already a replacement," Samaco said. "We think this (charge against Calajate) is Abenina's last ditch (effort) to hang on to his position by putting the blame on other people for his failures."

He added the president already knows about the "corruption going on at the LTO."

According to Samaco, the rift between Abenina and his comrades started when some LTO directors approached RAM and complained about Abenina's move to assign his former colleagues in the Philippine Constabulary to sensitive positions in the LTO.

The RAM then had a dialogue with Abenina and warned him that if the LTO needed to be reformed, then he would have to use the agency's organic staff.

"Apparently, he didn't follow that," Samaco said. "LTO officials kept coming to us to complain. We then gave him a warning regarding this and asked him to present himself before the (RAM) Executive Committee to explain."

But Abenina didn't appear before RAM officers. At this point, the RAM issued a statement saying they would adopt a "hand-off" policy on Abenina's style of running the LTO.

After this, Samaco said Abenina severed all links with RAM and started to smear the group's reputation in media.

Samaco claimed Abenina also pulled out his ex-constabulary comrades from their positions when he heard he was being replaced.

Samaco added RAM will be meeting soon to decide the fate of Abenina's membership in the organization.

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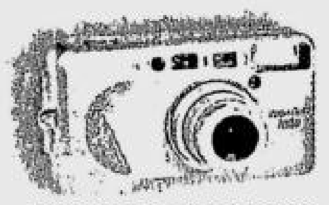

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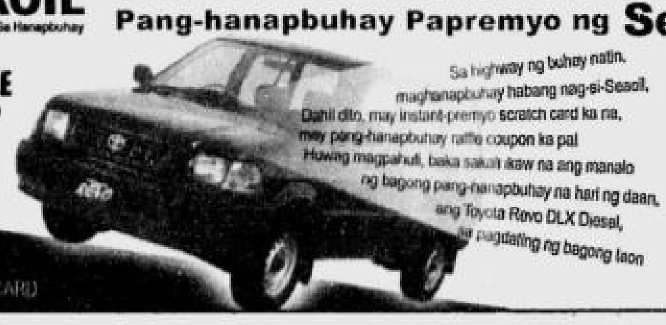

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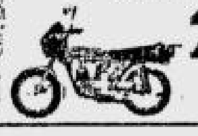

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10 PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749
1 MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2 ROCKSTAR
3 MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
4 HARRY POTTER
5 MUSKETEER
6 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7 SUMMER CATCH
8 THE SCORE
9 EARTHQUAKE
10 2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
11 MONSTERS, INC
12 WOLF GIRL

SM CITY MANILA
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3 MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
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7 SERENDIPITY
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10 2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
11 EARTHQUAKE
12 WOLF GIRL

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6331901 • 6330401
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3 HARRY POTTER
4 SUMMER CATCH
5 MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
6 THE SCORE
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8 EARTHQUAKE
9 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10 MUSKETEER
11 2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
12 WOLF GIRL

SM TUTUBAN
2514302
1 SUMMER CATCH
2 EARTHQUAKE
3 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4 WOLF GIRL

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9295452
1 WOLF GIRL
2 MUSKETEER
3 2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5 EARTHQUAKE
6 THE SCORE
7 SUMMER CATCH
8 HARRY POTTER
9 OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
10 MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
11 MARKOVA (RI)
12 MONSTERS, INC

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888
1 EARTHQUAKE
2 THE SCORE
3 HARRY POTTER
4 MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5 2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
6 MONSTERS, INC
7 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8 SUMMER CATCH
9 MUSKETEER
10 WOLF GIRL

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8829905
1 MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
2 2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 EARTHQUAKE

SM CEBU
2313876
1 OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2 HARRY POTTER
3 JOY RIDE
4 GLITTER
5 KAPITAN AMBO
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS
7 THE SCORE

SM ILOILO
3209422
1 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
2 CLOSED
3 THE SCORE
4 JOY RIDE
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS
6 GLITTER
7 CLOSED
8 HARRY POTTER

SM PAMPANGA
7120015
1 HARRY POTTER
2 JOY RIDE
3 MUSKETEER
4 OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
5 TIKIM
6 PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM SUCAT
8294975
1 SUMMER CATCH
2 MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
3 HARRY POTTER
4 PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM DAVAO
1 HARRY POTTER
2 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
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7 ROCKSTAR — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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3 THE SCORE — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
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5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE SCORE
6 GOLD (SDDS) SUMMER CATCH
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8 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
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4
5
6 (DTS) ROCKSTAR
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5 TALONG

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543.3927 loc. 150
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4 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
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6 SUMMER CATCH
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

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1 SUMMER CATCH

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1 DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
A MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

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2 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3
4

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2
3
4 MUSKETEER
5 EARTHQUAKE
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6 (DOLBY) EARTHQUAKE
7 (DTS) HARRY POTTER
8 MVP
9 MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

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2 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
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4 EARTHQUAKE
5 (SDDS) WOLF GIRL
6 MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
7 (DOLBY) HARRY POTTER
8 RESERVE

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2 DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE

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1 PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 TALONG

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1 (DOLBY)
2

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1 DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2 MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

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2 SUMMER CATCH

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3 (DTS) HARRY POTTER

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3 (DOLBY) HARRY POTTER
4 JOY RIDE

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2 WEYT A MINIT
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2 JOY RIDE
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2 (DTS)

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3 HARRY POTTER

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2 JOY RIDE
3 MONSTERS, INC.
4 TIKIM

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8 MUSKETEER
9 MONSTERS, INC.
10 WOLF GIRL

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1 SUMMER CATCH
2 WOLF GIRL
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6 HARRY POTTER
7 MUSKETEER

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2 HARRY POTTER
3 THE SCORE
4 MONSTERS, INC.
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6 WOLF GIRL
7 SUMMER CATCH
8 PISNGI

NOVALICHES
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1 EARTHQUAKE
2 WOLF GIRL
3 SUMMER CATCH
4 MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5 ROCKSTAR
6 MUSKETEER
7 HARRY POTTER
8 MONSTERS, INC.

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MARITAL RAPE / EROTIC DIARIES
ODEON	EARTHQUAKE
ODEON-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
ROBEN	PISNGI
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
REMAR	PISNGI
REMAR-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	DALAWANG PISNGI
B	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
C	SUTLA (RI)
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	SUMMER CATCH
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ROCKSTAR
CINEMA-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
CINEMA-3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE SCORE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-7	SUTLA (RI)
CINEMA-8	PISNGI
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	EARTHQUAKE
CINEMA-12	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
CINEMA-14	MUSKETEER
CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	THE MUSKETEER
CINEMA-2	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-4	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-5	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-6	THE SCORE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Concert of Porter, Gershwin tunes

IN HER distinctively haunting voice, she used to sing of the pains, struggles and simple joys of the ordinary people in alternative recordings and concerts during the 80s. But this Christmas, Susan Fernandez will sing the songs of Gershwin, Porter, Jobim, Bacharach, Legrand and even George Harrison in a concert at 8 tomorrow night, Dec. 18, at Savarin Restaurant, 33 Kalayaan Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

Organized by her friends, "A Christmas with Susan Fernandez and the Thin Alley Band," should be one happy Christmas party and reunion for many fans and admirers of Susan, many of whom are known and successful in their various fields of profession.

People such as writer-columnists Pete Lacaba and Conrad de Quiros, presidential spokesperson Bobby Tiglao, Makati Mayor Jojo Binay, former Agrarian Reform Secretary Boy Morales, poet-composer Jess Santiago, poet-adman Marne Kilates and many others are all "fans" of Fernandez.

Also a columnist, teacher and TV host, Susan will be accompanied by the Thin Alley Band composed of Egay Avenir, guitarist; Bong Concepcion, bassist; Rudy Sumang, sax; and Mario Elepano, keyboard.

Tickets for the concert are available at the Popular Bookstore at Tomas Morato Extension, corner Timog Avenue.

Hollywood's . . .

(From page A31)

"Nine Months" made $69M, "Stepmom" grossed $90M, and "Bicentennial Man" pulled in $58M. Those three films' substantial grosses made Columbus one of the few filmmakers whose movies' earnings topped the $1-B mark!

No wonder, when the "Harry Potter" project was scouting around for a director, Columbus' name was on top of its wish list.

The megabucks that his latest movie is making should eventually put him in the even more exclusive $1.5-B league, which most directors can't begin to approximate, even after a lifetime of filmmaking. The good news is, Chris Columbus is too young to even *think* of retirement.

Feedback

FROM **Jose Mari C. Maycacayan** of Binangonan, Rizal: "I would like to commend these TV shows and personalities for doing superior work this year: Best TV shows—'Travel Time' (Studio 23), 'Knowledge Power' (2), 'Game Plan! (23), 'Maynila' (7), 'The Probe Team' (7), 'Urban Doktor' (5), '5 & Up' (7), 'Extra, Extra' (7), 'Unang Hirit' (7), 'Kasangga' (7), 'Mayroon Akong Kuwento' (2).

"Outstanding TV personalities—**Jessica Zafra, Teddy Locsin Jr.** and **Cher Calvin** ('Points of View,' 23), **Ces Drilon** ('Pipol,' 2), **Susan Calo Medina** ('Travel Time,' 23), **Jon Santos** and **Manilyn Reynes** ('Sarap TV,' 2), **Ralion Alonzo** ('Eezy Dancing Nonstop,' 5), **John Lloyd Cruz** and **Kaye Abad** ('Tabing Ilog,' 2), **Noli de Castro** ('Magandang Gabi, Bayan,' 2), and **Eula Valdez** ('Pangako sa 'Yo,' 2)."

New technology for organic wastewater

BY N'TENG YEW
Contributor

HERE'S Filipino ingenuity at its best: Chemical engineer Jesselito V. Baring reinvented an old technology, perfecting it for Filipino application.

Baring has redesigned the rotary biological contactor (RBC) into a lightweight drum with a wire mesh surface, for treatment of organic wastewater.

His device looks like a tambiolo, so he called it a DrumBiolo, with the 'B' in uppercase to emphasize that his method of treatment is BIOLOgical and not chemical. And, although Baring's DrumBiolo is limited to the treatment of biodegradable organic waste, it may be used with other devices to treat inorganic wastes.

Baring's Drumbiolos

Here's how it works: During treatment, 40 percent of the DrumBiolo is submerged in organic wastewater, and it rotates slowly. Naturally occurring bacteria in the wastewater clings and settles on the mesh surface of the DrumBiolo forming a colony.

As the DrumBiolo rotates, the bacteria are alternately exposed to air, then wastewater then air again. While submerged, the bacteria collect organic wastes. When exposed to air, the bacteria breathe oxygen, eat organic wastes, and multiply.

Organic wastes are biodegradable and contain the kind of carbon molecules associated with living things. An example of wastewater with mostly only organic wastes is the underground septic tank at home into where waste from the toilet flows.

Industrial wastes commonly contain both organic and inorganic materials. But styrofoam and other plastics, which are made of chains and chains of carbon molecules, are not biodegradable and cannot be treated by DrumBiolos or by any conventional means.

Conventionally, wastewater is just stored in large tanks into which air is blown. The air bubbles provide oxygen to the naturally occurring bacteria in the wastewater. The inability to maintain a conducive balance between oxygen supply and organic waste concentrations makes conventional methods delicate to operate.

But Baring's DrumBiolos could maximize the use of naturally occurring bacteria to man's advantage, as in the treatment of wastewater with organic or *nabubulok* wastes.

1930's technology

One of the oldest technologies for wastewater treatment is the RBC, which was developed in Germany in the early 1930s. It reached the USA in the 1960s. But American RBC designers of that time were perhaps less knowledgeable about bacteria than the Germans, so that the American RBC counterpart failed to cut through the market.

The American version had heavier RBC drums, to accommodate bacterial content, which when more wet, colonized on the surface of the drums.

According to Baring, many American RBC drums even grew 10 times more in weight and became too heavy to rotate and function properly. Some RBC drum shafts, bearings, and motors even failed beyond repair, he noted.

And before any mechanical solution could be devised to solve the consequential malfunctions, the reputation America RBC had sunk in the gutter.

Claim to innovation

Baring claims to innovation is his revival of RBC for wastewater treatment in the Philippines and the adoption of lightweight wire mesh plus novel components to solve the problem of weight increase in RBC drums. His patented design is the DrumBiolo version of the RBC. Coupled with his knowledge on the nature of bacteria for wastewater treatment, Baring's DrumBiolos proved to be effective in both function and cost.

Baring, who is from Cebu City, also claims he is capable of designing and building complete treatment facilities for wastewater with both organic and inorganic wastes at a fraction of the price of imported technology.

"I bid for a water treatment project using my invention for a Jollibee," he reveals. "And my price is way below the foreign bidders. I come close to a German company also bidding for the project. But I am still inexpensive."

More affordable

Baring's DrumBiolos now operate in several water treatment facilities in Cebu and Metro Manila. One is at the Maribago Beach Resort in LapuLapu City, and another is at the Bogo Public Market in Cebu province.

In Metro Manila, the Prince Court motel in Sta. Mesa has Baring's DrumBiolos. A transportable model is at the Good Shepherd Food Products in Pasig City.

A 1981 cum laude chemical engineering graduate from the University of San Carlos, Baring was the laboratory manager of Atlas Mining for 12 years. In 1994, he put up his own environment engineering firm. When approached by several establishments for a cost-effective solution to their wastewater problems, Baring embarked on a research and design effort, which led him to his invention of the DrumBiolo that is more affordable even for small- and medium-sized business establishments.

Prize-winning invention

For his DrumBiolo, Baring in 1999 won third place at the regional R&D Contest by the Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development (PCIERD). This year, Baring placed 2nd at both the 1st Visayas-Mindanao Invention Contest, and the National Invention Contest for his DrumBiolo.

Today, Baring sits on the national board of the Filipino Inventors Society, and is a national vice president for both the Philippine Institute of Chemical Engineers and the Confederation of Scientific and Professional Organizations.

He was also the Jaycee's vice president for central Visayas, and a past president for region VII of Pollution Control Association of the Phil.

Mabuhay ka, Jesselito Baring.

(The author is a member of the Filipino Inventors Society. An engineering graduate of the University of the Philippines, Yew has a master's degree from Leeds University in England.)

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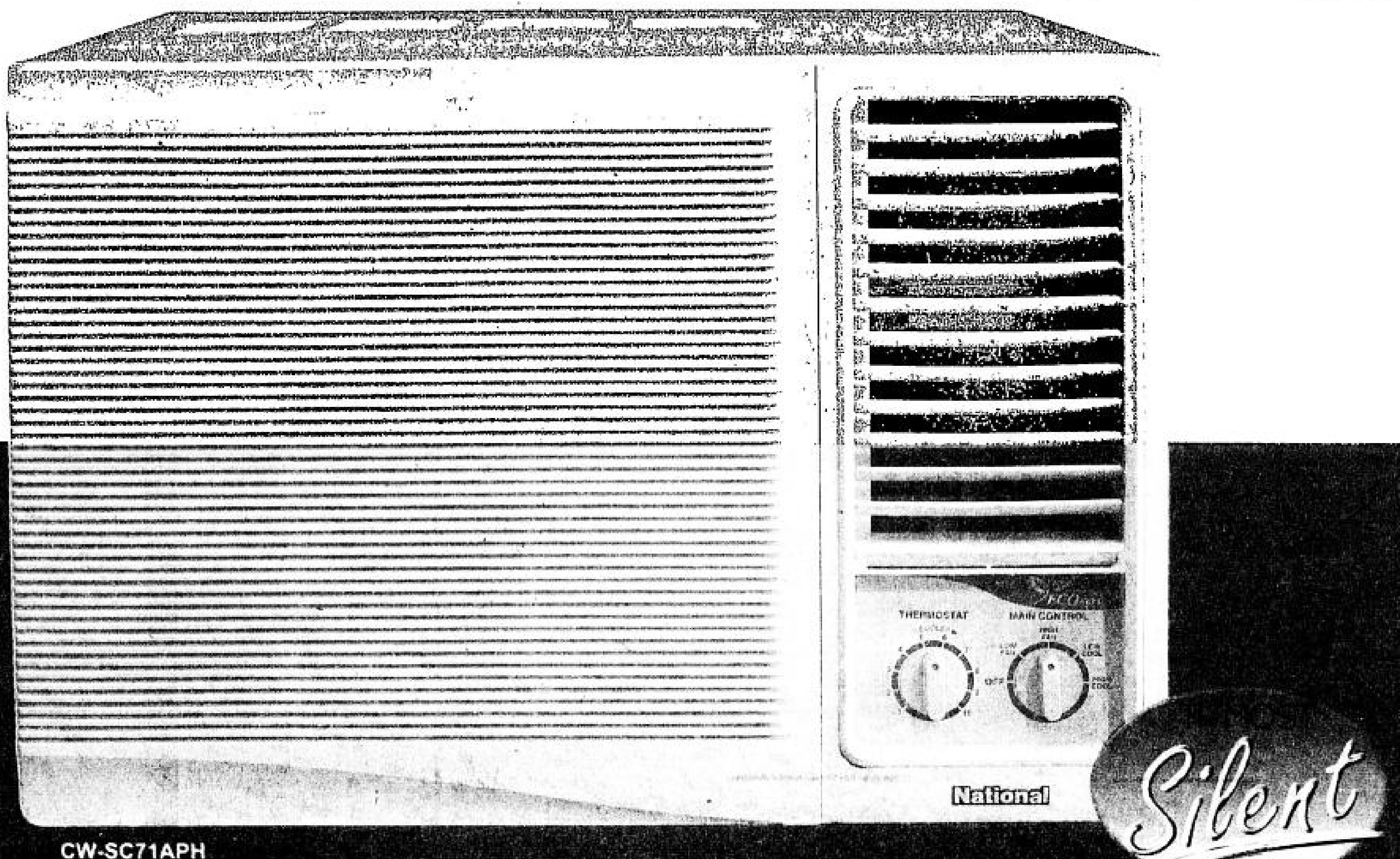

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Film about war in Mindanao is a vision of its producer

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

IT'S EASY to make a forecast on who will win in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF). But in the previous years, the tandem of director **Marilou Diaz-Abaya** and actor **Cesar Montano** has proven their enviable winning streak in the MMFF.

After such critically acclaimed and award-winning blockbusters like "Rizal" and "Muro-Ami," direk Marilou and Cesar are back in another filmfest entry, this time for Star Cinema in "Bagong Buwan."

The film is a tough contender for the best picture race, despite the presence of equally laudable entries like **Chito Roño**'s "Yamashita," **Joel Lamangan**'s "Hubog," and **Tikoy Aguiluz's** "Tatarin," among others.

"Bagong Buwan" is actually a vision of one of its producers, **Margie Moran Floirendo,** who dreams of lasting peace in Mindanao. The project was conceived in early 2000, when Margie called up Marilou after she (Margie) saw "Muro-Ami."

The movie made Margie cry and she asked Marilou if they could do the same film on the children of Mindanao, particularly the children caught in the war.

Marilou realized the enormity of the project, but when she gave her nod, she made sure she was on top of everything, from the script down to the costumes.

She brought in scriptwriters **Ricky Lee** and **Jun Lana** to work on the screenplay with her. She also did her own research, interviews and even lived with refugees at the evacuation camps in Cotabato.

"When we decided to film this project, the war in Mindanao hadn't erupted yet," Marilou grants. "But I believe I am an instrument in making a movie like this to uphold the integrity and dignity of the Muslims and show their struggle to other Filipinos."

After Erap called an all-out war, Marilou immersed herself in Islamic studies and the news stories about Mindanao. She became involved with scholars led by Fr. **Eliseo "Jun" Mercado,** the president of Notre Dame University in Cotabato. Her political tutor was Datu **Michael Mastura**, who is a direct descendant of Sultan Kudarat.

"We didn't make this movie to end the war," Marilou points out. ""This movie makes us better Christians because it shows how Muslims embrace their faith. The film speaks about the reality of the situation. It ends with hope. I wish Muslims will be the ones to make a film about themselves, but we all know it's not viable at the moment."

Cesar was cast in the lead and he gets support from equally competent performers such as **Amy Austria, Caridad Sanchez, Jericho Rosales** and **Ronnie Lazaro.**

"Bagong Buwan" is a co-production venture between Bahaghari Productions (with Margie and partner **Niña Romualdez**) and Star Cinema.

"We're proud of this movie," Margie enthuses. "We decided to do this film because despite the fact that there is a large percentage of Muslims in Mindanao, not many people know about them. The stories of the Filipino-Muslim community and culture haven't really been sufficiently told.

"We knew it would be an expensive project, but after we saw the finished product, we are convinced it was worth all the effort, trouble and expenses."

Three months before filming, Marilou required her cast members to do their own research about Islam, how the Muslims pray and how they talk.

Because of the events in Afghanistan and Mindanao, script revisions became inevitable. During the filming of the movie, representatives from the Department of National Defense and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have been consulted. The sequence treatment was submitted to them. Their views and opinions were sought, even when Marilou was working on the screenplay with Lee and Lana.

The cast and production crew went on location in Malaybalay, Bukidnon and the Calabarzon. A set was also built in La Mesa Dam, where portions of Mindanao were recreated for the big screen. This took up a large chunk of the film's P40-million budget.

"We created a set that's also a peace zone," Marilou shares. "This is neither pro-Muslim nor pro-military. This is pro-peace. What's loud and clear is the movie's message which is peace, regardless of religion, culture or customs."

The lady director believes the Christmas season is the perfect time to show "Bagong Buwan."

"This movie is about family love in the midst of war," she says. "It is devoted to reconciliation and peace. Even if we often read about the war, I'd like to show everyone that there's also peace in Mindanao."

Beyond the filming of "Bagong Buwan," Marilou intends to pursue Islamic studies. She says she is now qualified for the Bishop Ulama Forum, "where Catholic bishops and their Muslim Ulama counterparts sit together in a convention."

With "Bagong Buwan," Star Cinema expects to duplicate if not surpass its feat in last year's MMFF, where the outfit fielded the entry, "Tanging Yaman," which won best picture and several other awards.

THIRD TIME AROUND. Director Marilou Diaz Abaya and actor Cesar Montano work anew in another Metro Manila Film Festival entry, Star Cinema's "Bagong Buwan."

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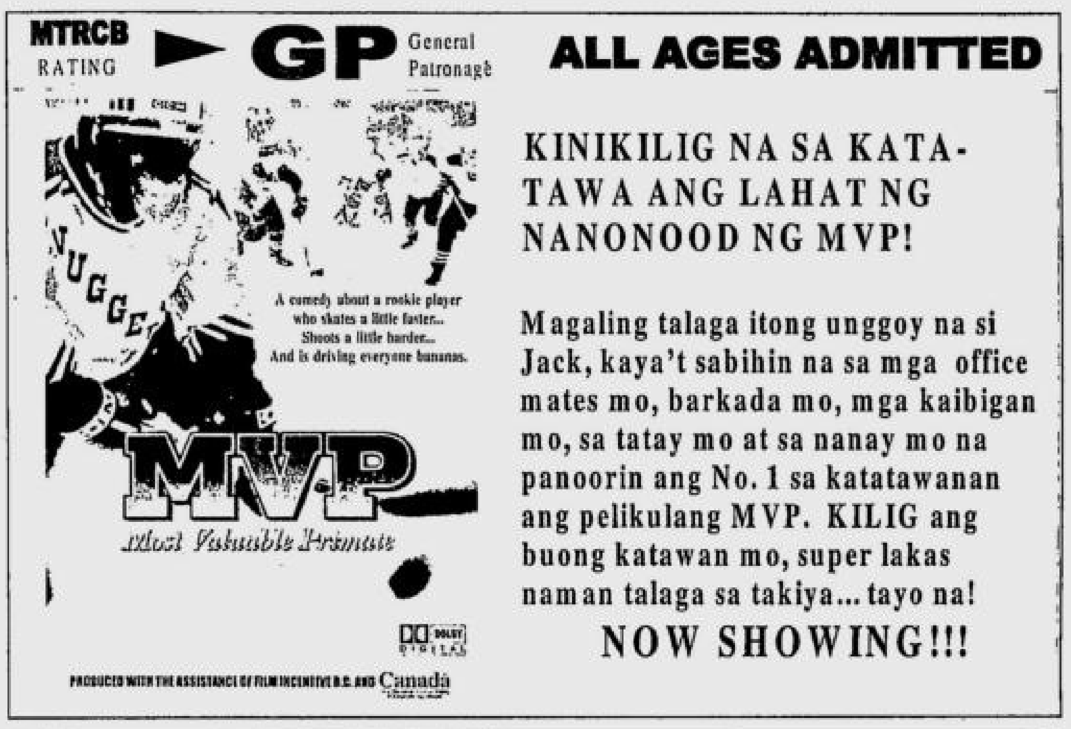
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LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

FORECAST FOR THE OSCARS

Almost anything goes in wide-open field

LOS ANGELES—What glorious chaos this year's Oscar race offers.

Frontrunners often begin to emerge by now. In past awards seasons, films such as "Titanic," "American Beauty" and last year's "Gladiator" rose to status as favorites in December and held on to dominate the Oscars in March.

But this time around, as studios screen the last of their prestige films, there are plenty of films catching solid Oscar buzz but there is no consensus on the lead contender. Reactions are across the board on latecomers with apparent Oscar pedigrees, among them "A Beautiful Mind," "Ali" and "Black Hawk Down."

And earlier films such as "Moulin Rouge" and "A.I. Artificial Intelligence" provoked love-it or hate-it sentiment among viewers.

Other awards help sort out the Oscar race. Major critics awards, honors from trade unions such as the Directors and Screen Actors guilds, the Golden Globes and the new American Film Institute awards can make or break a film's shot at Oscar nominations, which will be announced Feb. 12.

Another factor is box-office performance. If "A Beautiful Mind" or "Ali" were to bomb, their awards buzz could tail off.

Conversely, if "Vanilla Sky"—generally being dismissed as cinematic sleight-of-hand—were to catch on big with audiences, that could prompt awards voters to rethink its Oscar worthiness.

Here's a rundown of possible contenders in major categories:

Best Picture

There's a trio of films with the sort of weighty subject matter that often clicks with Oscar voters: "A Beautiful Mind," with Russell Crowe as paranoid schizophrenic and mathematical genius John Nash; "Ali," starring Will Smith as the outspoken boxer; and "Black Hawk Down," based on a doomed US military foray in Somalia.

Few are raving about the movies, though. Each has drawn healthy but unspectacular responses.

Another film on the Oscar radar, "The Majestic," starring Jim Carrey as a blacklisted screenwriter who loses his memory, is generally uninvolving, though its feel-good, patriotic ending might resonate with the national mood after the Sept. 11 attacks.

"The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring," part one of the J.R.R. Tolkien fantasy trilogy, has gained acclaim as a serious candidate. The film has exhilarating action and dazzling visuals, and nicely captures Tolkien's sense of camaraderie among hobbits, elves, dwarves, humans and wizards.

For awards season, "Lord of the Rings" probably has a leg up on the other big fantasy adaptation, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," which is on its way to becoming the year's top-grossing film but has provoked lukewarm critical response.

The tragi-comic musical "Moulin Rouge" has both fierce defenders and detractors. Its advantages: A nomination in the Golden Globe musical or comedy category would boost its Oscar hopes. And the film has notable achievements for every branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences: actors, directors, set designers, makeup artists, visual-effects creators—all can find something to appreciate.

Steven Spielberg's "A.I." has a tougher road. It has serious admirers, but it left many people cold and puzzled.

"The Royal Tenenbaums," an ensemble film about a family of failed geniuses, may have a shot, thanks largely to an outstanding cast led by Gene Hackman, Anjelica Huston and Gwyneth Paltrow.

Another ensemble, Robert Altman's satiric whodunit "Gosford Park," also might be in the running because of great performances.

Miramax also has the low-budget family drama "In the Bedroom" and the French-language film "Amelie." Both are best-picture longshots, but they're catching fire at the box office.

The indie hit "Memento," about a vengeful man with no short-term memory, is another longshot, as is the low-budget death-row drama "Monster's Ball," starring Billy Bob Thornton and Halle Berry.

With the addition of an animated-film category this year, the cartoon features "Shrek" and "Monsters, Inc." appear less likely to compete in the overall best-picture field.

Best Actor

This could be the most competitive acting category, dominated by big-name winners and nominees from past years. The most likely of those: last year's winner, Russell Crowe, for "A Beautiful Mind"; Kevin Spacey, "The Shipping News"; Denzel Washington, "Training Day"; Gene Hackman, "The Royal Tenenbaums"; Sean Penn, "I Am Sam."

Other past winners who may have a shot: Anthony Hopkins, "Hearts in Atlantis"; Kevin Kline, "Life as a House"; and, if anyone can remember all the way back to January when "The Pledge" opened, Jack Nicholson.

In his first major dramatic lead, Will Smith delivers well enough with "Ali" to warrant Oscar consideration.

Tom Cruise is good in "Vanilla Sky," but lackluster response to the film might scuttle his chances. Ditto for Haley Joel Osment in "A.I.," who also faces a possible reluctance by Oscar voters to nominate a child actor in a lead category.

Other possibilities: Ewan McGregor, "Moulin Rouge"; Tom Wilkinson, "In the Bedroom"; Billy Bob Thornton for either "The Man Who Wasn't There" or "Monster's Ball"; Guy Pearce, "Memento."

Best Actress

This was last year's strongest category, with Julia Roberts ultimately coasting to victory for "Erin Brockovich." It's a lighter field this year, opening the door for contenders in smaller films that don't necessarily scream "Oscar."

Nicole Kidman has two shots for a nomination: as a singing prostitute in "Moulin Rouge" and as a mother beset by phantoms in "The Others." Past winner Sissy Spacek seems like a shoo-in for a nomination with her icy, repressed performance as a grieving mother from "In the Bedroom."

Other possibilities: Michelle Pfeiffer, "I Am Sam"; Tilda Swinton, "The Deep End"; Halle Berry, "Monster's Ball"; Cate Blanchett, "Charlotte Gray"; Judi Dench, "Iris"; Julianne Moore, "The Shipping News"; Audrey Tautou, "Amelie"; Stockard Channing, "The Business of Strangers"; Hilary Swank, "The Affair of the Necklace."

Longshot: Thora Birch, "Ghost World"; and if a comic performance can catch attention, there's Reneé Zellweger for "Bridget Jones's Diary."

Best Supporting Actor

What gives with Jon Voight? First, he was unrecognizable as Franklin Roosevelt in "Pearl Harbor," now he's more unrecognizable as Howard Cosell in "Ali." But his turn as the sportscaster could earn him a nomination. "Ali" costar Jamie Foxx also may have prospects as a troubled buddy of the boxer.

Other possibilities: Ben Kingsley, "Sexy Beast"; Ian McKellen and Viggo Mortensen, "Lord of the Rings"; Ethan Hawke, "Training Day"; Clive Owen, "Gosford Park"; Ewan McGregor, Tom Sizemore and William Fichtner, "Black Hawk Down"; Jim Broadbent for either "Moulin Rouge" or "Iris"; Marlon Brando, "The Score"; Jude Law, "A.I."; Joe Pantoliano, "Memento"; Luke Wilson and Owen Wilson, "The Royal Tenenbaums."

Longshots: Steve Buscemi, "Ghost World," and Steve Zahn, "Riding in Cars With Boys."

Supporting Actress

Yes, she's a pretty face, but Jennifer Connelly has proved in recent years that she's a terrific actress. She could emerge as a front-runner for "A Beautiful Mind."

Other possibilities: Gwyneth Paltrow and Anjelica Huston, "The Royal Tenenbaums"; Maggie Smith, Helen Mirren and Kelly Macdonald, "Gosford Park"; Frances McDormand, "The Man Who Wasn't There"; Frances O'Connor, "A.I."; Carrie-Anne Moss, "Memento"; Kate Winslet, "Iris"; Judi Dench, "The Shipping News"; Cameron Diaz and Penelope Cruz, "Vanilla Sky"; Marisa Tomei, "In the Bedroom"; Robin Wright Penn, "The Pledge"; Naomi Watts, "Mulholland Drive."

KIDMAN. Might make it as best actress nominee for the tragi-comic musical, "Moulin Rouge."

SMITH. His true-to-life portrayal of the lead in "Ali" might earn for him a best actor citation.

Then there's Julie Andrews' classy take on royalty in "The Princess Diaries." And child actress Dakota Fanning might have a shot for "I Am Sam"; young girls have a solid Oscar history in the supporting-actress category.

Best Director

Ron Howard got skunked when "Apollo 13" picked up an armload of nominations but not for directing. This time, he'll likely get the credibility of a best-director nomination for "A Beautiful Mind."

Other possibilities: Ridley Scott, who made last year's best picture winner "Gladiator," for "Black Hawk Down"; Michael Mann, "Ali"; Peter Jackson, "Lord of the Rings"; Baz Luhrmann, "Moulin Rouge"; Steven Spielberg, "A.I."; Wes Anderson, "The Royal Tenenbaums"; Lasse Hallstrom, "The Shipping News"; Robert Altman, "Gosford Park"; Christopher Nolan, "Memento."

Longshots: Chris Columbus, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"; Frank Darabont, "The Majestic"; Jean-Pierre Jeunet, "Amelie"; Cameron Crowe, "Vanilla Sky"; Alejandro Amenabar, "The Others"; Todd Field, "In the Bedroom."

AP

Hollywood's filthy rich filmmaker

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE RUNAWAY success of "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" has further enhanced the already solid hitmaking reputation of its director, **Chris Columbus**. "Harry Potter" has already gone beyond the $200-M mark, and could end up earning as much as $400M, making it one of the five top blockbusters of all time.

Columbus' other movies haven't done too badly, either, thank you very much. His 1987 movie, "Adventures in Babystting," scored a respectable $34M, not bad for a small movie.

He stumbled with his next flick, "Heartbreak Hotel," which expired after making only $5.5M. But he recovered more than nicely with "Home Alone," which ran laughing all the way to the bank, to deposit the whopping $285M it earned!

"Home Alone" established Columbus as Hollywood's hot new navigator through the rough seas that moviemaking had to contend with in 1990. However, his follow-up film, "Only the Lonely," couldn't match people's heightened expectations and tanked after making only $19M.

Determined to make up for lost ground, Columbus gave the sure-fire "Home Alone" franchise another go, and the sequel, "Lost In New York," made him a cool comer again with its impressive $173-M gross.

Incredibly, in 1993, Columbus followed up on that hit sequel with *another* blockbuster, the **Robin Williams** cross-dressing blockbuster, "Mrs. Doubtfire," which grossed an amazing $219M! Thus, in only six years of filmmaking, the total gross of Columbus' movies was a whopping $800M!

No wonder that top movie honchos were beating a path to his door, offering him some of the hottest projects that had been given the green light by Hollywood's smartest producers.

HOLLYWOOD'S/ A29

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

Kris Aquino was busy taping her show beyond midnight over the weekend. Her column will be back on Friday.

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• Galaxy Records Artists Musical Show - Dec. 22 8 to 10pm
Guest Artists: Rockstar 3, Legit Mizfitz
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INVESTORS HOLDING BACK

BOI-listed investments slump

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

THE BOARD of Investments generated less than a billion pesos in new and expansion project registrations in November as President Macapagal's series of state visits has yet to yield dividends in terms of increased foreign investments.

The BOI said November investments reached P732.11 million, down 71 percent from P2.498 billion during the same month last year. This pushed the agency's investment tally to P101.63 billion in the first 11 months this year, up 161.6 percent from P38.85 billion during the same period a year ago.

The bulk of this year's investments were generated in the first seven months and registrations have shrunk substantially starting in August.

This downtrend is likely to continue up to next year as businessmen put on hold their investments due to the prevailing global economic slump and local concerns such as too much politicking and peace and order problems.

Domestic telecommunication firms seeking tax breaks for their expansion programs accounted for most of the investments between January and November. These were Globe Telecom Inc. (P39.728 billion), Smart Communications Inc. (P17.102 billion) and Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. (P8.17 billion).

Philippine equity investments soared 444 percent to P45.88 billion during the 11-month period. This was more than double the equity investments made by foreign investors (P18.8 billion, up 209 percent from last year). The top foreign investors during the period were from Singapore (P9.41 billion), United States (P2.85 billion), Japan (P1.65 billion), Australia (P1.32 billion) and Sweden (P720 million).

Despite the apparent slowdown in investments over the last four months, Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II remained optimistic on the continued attractiveness of the Philippines as an investment destination. "There is a resiliency in their interest in the country," Roxas said.

The Philippines is not only competing for a shrinking amount of foreign direct investments (owing to the recession in the major economies) but also with an increasing number of countries in attracting new money, specifically China whose entry to the World Trade Organization has made it an even more potent investment destination.

The Philippines is likewise hobbled by its meager incentive package, which it needs to be able to offset the country's negative factors such as poor infrastructure and high cost of electricity and labor.

DoE opposes plan to raise taxes on petroleum products

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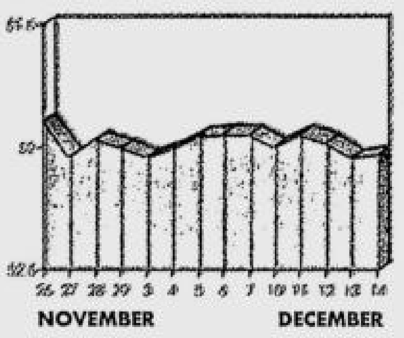

GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

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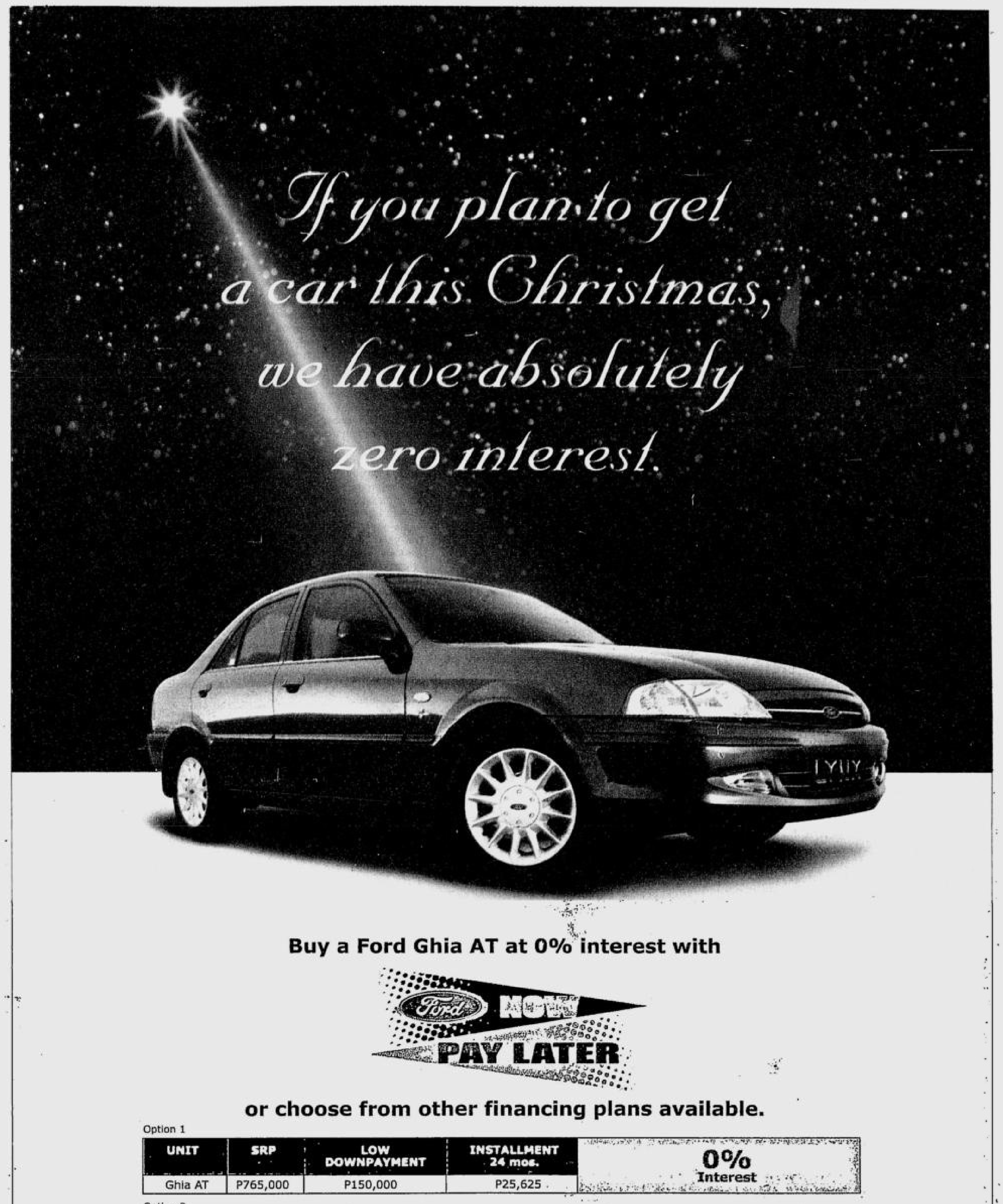
Renewed buying seen to lift stock prices

AFTER a week of consolidation, selective bargain-hunting is expected to prop up the local stock market this week, with the $540-million investment deal forged by index heavyweight San Miguel Corp. with Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd. of Japan on Friday still acting as a major catalyst.

(See story on Page B2.)



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SMC seen using Kirin funds for logistics center project

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. is planning to use part of the proceeds from a $540-million deal with Kirin Co. Brewery Ltd. of Japan to finally jumpstart a multibillion-peso plan to build the infrastructure aimed at catapulting itself into an Asean logistics and distribution powerhouse.

SMC vice president for corporate planning Belen Buensuceso said the funds were expected to come in by March next year, after the 15-percent buy-in deal with Kirin had been ratified in a special stockholders' meeting scheduled in late February.

"The funds will be used to increase capital expenditures, invest in related businesses such as our logistics center and for new acquisitions," she said.

Other sources also noted that some more domestic acquisitions, specifically for hard liquor unit La Tondeña Distillers Inc., were currently being worked out by SMC to strengthen its food and beverage businesses.

But while the deal included a mutual right of first refusal between Kirin and SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, who was voting on a 20-percent block, SMC did not seek a similar option to likewise purchase shares in Kirin.

Buensuceso also noted that the $1-billion cash balance built from the previous sale of Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. and Nestlé Philippines had been depleted with SMC's acquisition binge, but the fresh funds would be used to continue SMC's expansion activities.

SMC started its acquisition spree in 2000 and has had five major corporate takeovers since then. It bought powdered juice and jelly snack manufacturer Sugarland Foods Inc. for P2.9 billion, then took over a controlling stake in Australian premier brewer J. Boag & Sons for about $55 million.

SMC then regained control of CCBPI through a $1-billion cash-and-share swap with Coca Cola Amatil Ltd. of Australia, and then acquired major rival in the food business Pure Foods Corp. from the Ayala group for P7 billion.

Most recently, the SMC group forged a deal to buy Cosmos Bottlers Corp. for P14 billion. The financial closing of this transaction with RFM Corp. is expected before the year ends.

The Cojuangco camp had claimed that the fresh capital infusion from Kirin would be devoted solely for expansion activities and not to repurchase the shares held by the Coconut Industry Investment Fund, which, after the Kirin deal, would still control about 26.8 percent of SMC.

One of the beneficiaries of the Kirin deal, officials said, was a P5-billion company incorporated by SMC early this year to help the conglomerate become an Asean logistics and distribution powerhouse.

The new unit, called Logistics Co., was one of the SMC investments questioned by minority shareholders during the company's stockholders' meeting last May.

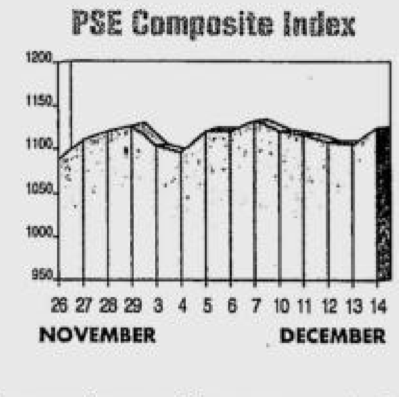
The plan was to acquire about 400 hectares of agro-industrial and ecological land south of Metro Manila to house world-class port facilities with bulk-handling capabilities. The integration of production facilities in one complex aims to facilitate seamless operation and optimize synergies across SMC's core businesses and thus improve its cost-competitiveness. The entire complex was earlier estimated to cost between P8 billion and P10 billion to develop.

Renewed buying seen to lift stock prices

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

MARKET PLAY

PSE Composite Index



AFTER a week of consolidation, selective bargain-hunting is expected to prop up the local stock market this week, with the $540-million investment deal forged by index heavyweight San Miguel Corp. with Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd. of Japan on Friday still acting as a major catalyst.

News about the deal on Friday pushed the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange index to close 18.28 points higher at 1,126.01 that day, although for the entire week, the index was down 4.19 points or 0.37 percent.

The stock market is closed today in observance of an Islamic fasting holiday but is seen to reopen tomorrow with a positive momentum.

Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said Kirin's impending purchase of a 15-percent stake in SMC would continue to perk up the market on some follow-through buying of SMC shares.

As SMC shares would be sold to Kirin at P63 per share, analysts expected that there was still some room for its stocks to rise. On Friday, SMC "A" and "B" shares surged by P2.50 to P44 and by P5 to P55.50, respectively.

BPI Securities analyst Roberto Cano also noted that after consolidating between 1,100 and 1,130 during the last two weeks, bargain-hunting would likely boost the market, which would also benefit from the recent cuts in interest rates by the US Federal Reserve and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"With the market coming to a close for the year, some investors are likely to bargain-hunt in anticipation of better prospects for next year," Cano said.

"Technically, if the market breaks the 1,130 to 1,135 resistance, the Phisix can rise up to the 1,200-1,250 range. Corrections in the market are opportunities for accumulation," he stressed.

Cano also noted that investors were expected to focus on issues with new corporate developments, such as the reported deal on the joint sale of shares held by the government and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan in Philippine National Bank.

Web-based investment guide Philstocks.net said most players would likely be on a Christmas vacation mode this week but there was still some room for local stocks to move up.

"Fund managers are expected to put their cash to work as we have the end of the year coming up. The window-dressing should set us up for a strong finishing kick for the year. The key levels for the Phisix to watch out for are at the 1,150 and 1,250," Philstocks.net said.

Philstocks.net said the market's recovery from the October lows would set a positive tone for the next couple of weeks.

"Corporate earnings clearly remain a problem for the market. But with most investors believing that the global economy is recovering, such faith is now being priced into stocks. Locally, the economic picture is also improving with the country's rating possibly getting an upgrade. The improving sentiments may actually be part of the early stages of an economic recovery," it said.

Philstocks.net also predicted that distressed banking issues which were beginning to show signs of improvement like PNB and Equitable PCI Bank would get attention from the market.

Aboitiz eyes new ventures

DESPITE the difficult economic environment, Cebu-based conglomerate Aboitiz Equity Ventures is scouting for new expansion opportunities, particularly in the areas of power and financial services.

AEV chair Jon Ramon Aboitiz told reporters that the conglomerate had no plans of selling any of its existing investments but was instead keen on expanding its core businesses.

"At this point, all our assets are doing well. That's why we're very happy about it and obviously we're looking for new ventures," Aboitiz said.

"They have to be in the areas of power and financial services/banking as those are the two areas that we're focusing on."

The group's flagship business is Aboitiz Power Corp., which contributed P925 million of AEV's bottom line of P1.3 billion for the first nine months of the year, 80 percent higher than its contribution last year. Most of Aboitiz Power's earnings came from its 50-percent stake in Luzon Hydro Corp., a 70-megawatt hydroelectric power plant in Benguet province that went on stream this year.

Its other investments are in Hydro Electric Development Corp., Northern Mini Hydro Corp., Western Mindanao Power Corp. and Southern Philippines Power Corp.

AEV's banking subsidiaries generated P249 million, 10 percent higher than last year's comparative figure. Union Bank of the Philippines contributed P241 million, while City Savings Bank accounted for P7.6 million.

But if AEV decided to pursue new capital-intensive projects next year, Aboitiz said it could still afford to seek new financing, noting that the conglomerate was lightly leveraged.

"But financing will be one of the biggest challenges for the coming year. Long-term credit is becoming expensive, but businesses need it to expand," he said.

He noted that the target was for AEV to continue the 38-percent growth for the first nine months.

Aboitiz Equity's other non-power and non-banking subsidiaries included shipping firm WG&A and Pilmico Foods Corp.

On the power business expansion, AEV is seen focusing on acquiring small government power plants despite the likely approval of the power reform bill, which will give it the opportunity to buy assets of the state-owned National Power Corp.

Lopez service firm plans expansion overseas

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

LOPEZ-OWNED location-based services company FindMe LBS last week launched its 24-hour call center that would pave the way for its operations in other Asia-Pacific countries as well as in the United States and Europe.

With its own call center facility, FindMe need not set up systems outside the country for it to operate in the international market.

The company and its international partners are negotiating for some projects in Indonesia and Australia. It is eyeing the American and European markets as well.

FindMe's call center service will provide their clients information on where their vehicles are located at any given time. This is particularly useful for fleet owners and managers who are out of their offices but urgently need to find their vehicles.

Just by dialing the FindMe hotline number 434-6363, existing clients can also report technical problems, with the assurance that FindMe's technical team will respond immediately.

The company also assures its clients of the security of all information that they will transmit through the telephone. The call center has state-of-the-art hardware and software capable of a multi-layered authentication procedure as well as a shadow monitoring system that will record voice conversations and all movements on the computer screen.

Potential clients can call FindMe's hotline number as well and avail themselves of information about the company's host of applications and solutions as well as how they can use these to benefit their own businesses.

FindMe's client base includes multinational companies with large-scale logistics operations, like Federal Express and First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp.

With the company's call center launch, more companies are expected to follow suit, specially those engaged in delivering high-value cargo.

The Lopez firm is the first and only company in the Philippines to offer location-based services. It currently offers GSM (global system for mobile communications)-based vehicle tracking services through a dedicated base station, the Internet, and cellular phones.

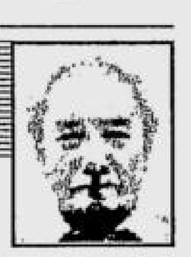
It is also the only company that offers tracking solutions using the AceS (Asia Cellular Satellite) satellite, which gives it coverage outside the country.

Aside from its own tracking services, FindMe also has existing location-based services with the country's major cellular companies, Globe Telecom Inc. and Smart Communications Inc. It also has partnerships with international companies.

FindMe is a member of the eLopez Solutions Group, the technology arm of the Lopez conglomerate.

Documentary stamp odyssey

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES



Honesto C. General

OF the taxes inflicted on us all, the documentary stamp has got to be the most bothersome. There is no escape. You go to City Hall to get a certified copy of your tax declaration. You buy the stamp from a little old lady in the far corner at double the official price.

The tax code devotes Title VII consisting of 29 sections spread over 11 pages just on the documentary stamp. The tax is levied "upon documents, instruments, loan agreements, and papers, and upon acceptances, assignments, sales and transfer of the obligation, right or property incident thereon." Also, it is slapped on all non-life insurance policies.

Fifty years ago, the documentary stamp tax was only one-and-a-half percent of premium. Marcos tripled it to 3.75 percent. Cory Aquino doubled that to 7.5 percent. Ramos raised it to the present of 12.5 percent of premium. Who knows what Erap would have done had he stayed in Malacañang longer.

It was not so much the amount but the way it was collected that was bothersome. The insurance company bought panes of the stamp from the BIR. The stamp was glued to the original copy of the policy. Then, the BIR saw that after the policy was delivered to the insured, it was hard to check whether the stamp was really affixed. So, the BIR ruled that the stamp was to be affixed to the office copy of the policy. This was the manual stage.

Later, the stamping machine was invented. You lugged the machine to the BIR and paid for a full load. Then, you machine-stamped the office copies of the policies.

Now, the electronic age has caught up with the tax. The BIR supplies the company, for free, an electronic imprinting machine. The stamp is electronically imprinted on the policy and instantly recorded in the big computer at the BIR.

But every time the BIR revises its rules to solve some problems, new problems are created. The problem with the electronic imprinting machine is this: If the policy on which the tax has been electronically imprinted is canceled because the insured changed his mind, the machine cannot reverse the charges. As a result, the insurance company ends up paying the stamp tax on premiums never collected.

Which brings up the basic question: What is the real nature of the documentary stamp? The BIR claims it is the payment for the government's granting the taxpayer the privilege to enter into a transaction such as an insurance policy. I disagree. To protect my house with fire insurance is a basic right. It is as basic as installing a fire alarm system, or putting a fence around my property. Besides, if the tax is in payment of a privilege granted by government, then the tax should be fixed, nominal amount as in Singapore where the tax is one solitary dollar no matter what the amount of the premium may be.

Being 12.5 percent of premium, the tax is a form of sales tax. Where there is no sale, there is no sales tax. Where there is no premium (under the insurance code, the policy is not good unless and until the premium is paid), there should not be a stamp tax.

Actually, the tax is 50 centavos for every P4 or premium or fraction thereof. The system is anchored on collecting the tax on that fraction. Life will be much simpler all around if the BIR charges 12.5 percent of premium as reported by the insurance companies to the insurance commission. The BIR will lose the tax on the fraction, but this will be offset by much simpler collection system.

By the way, the stamp was the first direct tax imposed by the British Parliament on the American colonies in 1765. It was affixed on all legal and commercial documents, pamphlets, playing cards and newspapers. The tax was one of the causes of the American Revolution. Must we rise in revolt to get rid of this most bothersome tax?

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, December 14, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54	56.5	54	56.5	489,000
China Banking Corp.	560	560	560	560	2,060
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	22	22.25	22	22.25	234,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	179	180	178	180	12,020
Philippine National Bank	55	56.5	55	56.5	42,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	19	19	19	19	3,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	38,700
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	230,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1280	1300	1280	1300	520
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1130	1135	1125	1130	25,310
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	23	23	23	23	51,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.39	1,250,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	580	580	575	580	44,490
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	1,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	900,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	405	410	402.5	407.5	236,710
Ivantage Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.48	0.48	170,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	26,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	22.5	23	22.5	22.5	12,600
Manila Electric Co. B	30.5	30.5	30	30	1,074,100
Petron Corp.	1.44	1.5	1.42	1.48	5,643,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	40,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	15,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.88	1.94	1.88	1.94	1,827,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	40,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	5,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.7	491,000
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	24	24	23	23.5	85,200
RFM Corp.	2.14	2.24	2.1	2.2	18,961,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42	44	42	44	400,400
San Miguel Corp. B	51	56	51	55.5	547,600
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Ayala Corp.	4.55	4.65	4.55	4.6	5,649,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.68	1,780,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	50,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	50,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.18	210,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.65	0.66	23,950,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	700,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	60,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,190,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	25.5	26	25.5	26	82,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	200,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	480,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.54	71,000
Medco Holdings	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.13	110,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.69	0.71	0.69	0.7	5,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	8,070,000
Music Corp.	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.37	4,000,000
Solid Group, Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	300,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.77	0.79	0.77	0.79	370,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13	13.25	13	13.25	164,800
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	620,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22.75	22.75	22.5	22.5	1,794,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.58	1.6	1.56	1.56	145,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10	10	10	10	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc -Warrants	0.0055	0.006	0.005	0.006	182,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	11,523,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	600,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	700,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	2,650,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.76	1.7	1.74	9,069,000
City & Land Developers	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	11,179,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	300,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.8	3	2.7	3	59,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.3	2.4	1.3	1.3	23,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.022	0.022	0.02	0.02	6,400,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	180,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	200,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	170,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	18,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	360,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,078,310	68,234,930.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	346,443,400	360,071,075.00
PRO	36,141,000	139,895,630.00
Mining	14,382,000	513,200.00
OIL	189,360,000	1,209,300.00
GRAND TOTALS :	587,414,710	569,949,135.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	466.80	UP 10.01
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,547.62	UP 23.36
PRO	489.87	DOWN 1.78
Mining	1,016.96	DOWN 6.29
OIL	1.98	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	690.12	UP 0.61
Composite	1,126.01	UP 18.28

NO. OF ADVANCES: 27; NO. OF DECLINES: 31; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 34;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 92; NO. OF TRADES: 2,497

CURRENCIES

Dec. 14, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency In US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.119695	1.000000	52.0340
Japan	Yen	0.008894	0.007943	0.4133
United Kingdom	Pound	1.612585	1.440200	74.9394
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.143735	0.128370	6.6796
Switzerland	Franc	0.677823	0.605364	31.4995
Canada	Dollar	0.713500	0.637227	33.1575
Singapore	Dollar	0.612190	0.546747	28.4494
Australia	Dollar	0.579552	0.517598	26.9327
Bahrain	Dinar	2.970172	2.652661	138.0286
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.298586	0.266667	13.8758
Brunei	Dollar	0.610521	0.545256	28.3719
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000111	0.000099	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.025646	0.022904	1.1918
UAE	Dirham	0.304928	0.272331	14.1705
Korea	Won	0.000886	0.000791	0.0412
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.893100	46.4716
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.456635	23.7605
France	Franc	0.152450	0.136152	7.0845
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.405271	21.0879
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064904	3.3772
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022139	1.1520
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000461	0.0240
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.150209	7.8160
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004455	0.2318
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005368	0.2793
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022139	1.1520
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.134003	59.0067

Looking for a new leg

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

HE had been putting it off for months, but Metro Pacific chair Manuel V. Pangilinan is finally scheduled to undergo a knee surgery in Stanford today.

Colleagues blame the three-time-a-week squash game and his 24/7 work ethic for not only weakening his knees but also for causing a minor heart attack last year.

After the Bay Area surgery, MVP will fly to Hong Kong for a yearend planning conference of the mother company, First Pacific, to discuss a possible "third leg" that the regional conglomerate would venture into.

Typical of investment bankers, MVP and his First Pacific colleagues need to find a new venture which they could later flip "if," to use a favorite quote among MVP's colleagues, "the price is right."

It was this philosophy that the First Pacific Group, betting that the Asian crisis was bottoming out, put all its eggs into the regional basket and ventured into four major investments, "four legs" in MVPspeak, namely, telecommunications, food, marketing/distribution and property.

But the belated discovery of a financial black hole in Piltel and the continued real estate/peso downturn have practically kneecapped the group's ventures down to two—telecommunications and food, the latter represented by Indonesia's Indofood, the world's largest instant-noodle maker.

It had to recently sell its profitable marketing/distribution leg, Berli Jucker in Thailand, just to buy time for its hemorrhaging leg, the Fort Bonifacio investment.

Still, despite Metro Pacific's pronouncements, MVP has not entirely given up on The Fort, at least this was our impression from the dinner the INQUIRER had Thursday with MVP and his cavalry.

Our reading is that despite the urgings of his Hong Kong colleagues and Indon principals, MVP would bat for keeping the Fort's commercial center under Metro Pacific and instead sell off the fringe lots, just as it had recently did with the Manila Golf condominium row.

After all, this strategy was what the Ayalas had stumbled into, when it disposed off its Singalong swamps and Makati barrios to concentrate on what is now its crown jewel.

But this, of course, is only our knee-jerk analysis.

Sy in Xiamen

TAIPAN Henry Sy has made a tentative foray in his ancestral land with the soft opening last Thursday of an SM Mall in Xiamen.

With a total retail area of 70,000 square meters, the five-story mall looks like a typical SM mall with its shoebox design, said the taipan's eldest daughter, Teresita Sy-Coson.

But unlike the SM malls here, the Xiamen mall will not have the typical SM Department Store and Supermarket as anchor tenants. Despite the invitation of the provincial authorities, the Sys decided against venturing into retail there after judging that they do not know enough of the local business conditions.

Purely a real estate venture, the Xiamen mall—an "experiment," was how Coson put it—was built in partnership with a Hong Kong group. Despite its generic name, the mall is outside of the listed SM Prime Holdings investments. It was, according to Coson, the family's first overseas venture.

The Xiamen mall's anchor stores are Walmart, the US retail giant, which opened last week, and a Taiwan-based department store chain, Lai Ya, which is due to open by March/April, to coincide with the mall's formal inauguration.

Heard through the grapevine

ABS-CBN is laying off about 150 talents, writers and production assistants/personnel by year's end, the first wave of the company-wide retrenchment program.

As part of cost cutting, the stock market coverage of its ANC cable channel has also chucked off the crawling ticker tape, with the business reporters reassigned to cover crime and other general news.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Resins firms see ₱2-B losses due to smuggling

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

PHILIPPINE manufacturers of plastic resins are expected to post losses of at least P2 billion this year from weak sales mainly due to the rampant smuggling of petrochemical products, particularly through the use of customs bonded warehouses where imported raw materials meant for re-export are diverted to the domestic market without paying duties and taxes.

Association of Petrochemical Manufacturers of the Philippines (APMP) chair Wilfredo Paras said the petrochemical firms had to contend not only with weak consumer demand but also with unfair competition posed by smuggled plastic resins.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Paras said unscrupulous traders have taken advantage of the government's lack of resources to monitor CBWs and loopholes in its customs policy to bring in illegally surplus resin output from South Korea and other Asian countries.

Paras said the most pernicious form of smuggling was being made in the hundreds of CBWs in the country where resins and plastic goods are slipped out for sale to the domestic market. Most of the CBWs cover up the diverted goods by declaring them as production losses, which explain the unusually high rate of wastage in these special warehouses.

Paras said the CBWs chalked up a 200-percent increase in their re-export of plastic resins and goods

RESINS/ B7

Renewed buying . . .

(From page B2)

"Corporate earnings clearly remain a problem for the market. But with most investors believing that the global economy is recovering, such faith is now being priced into stocks. Locally, the economic picture is also improving with the country's rating possibly getting an upgrade. The improving sentiments may actually be part of the early stages of an economic recovery," it said.

Philstocks.net also predicted that distressed banking issues which were beginning to show signs of improvement like PNB and Equitable PCI Bank would get attention from the market.

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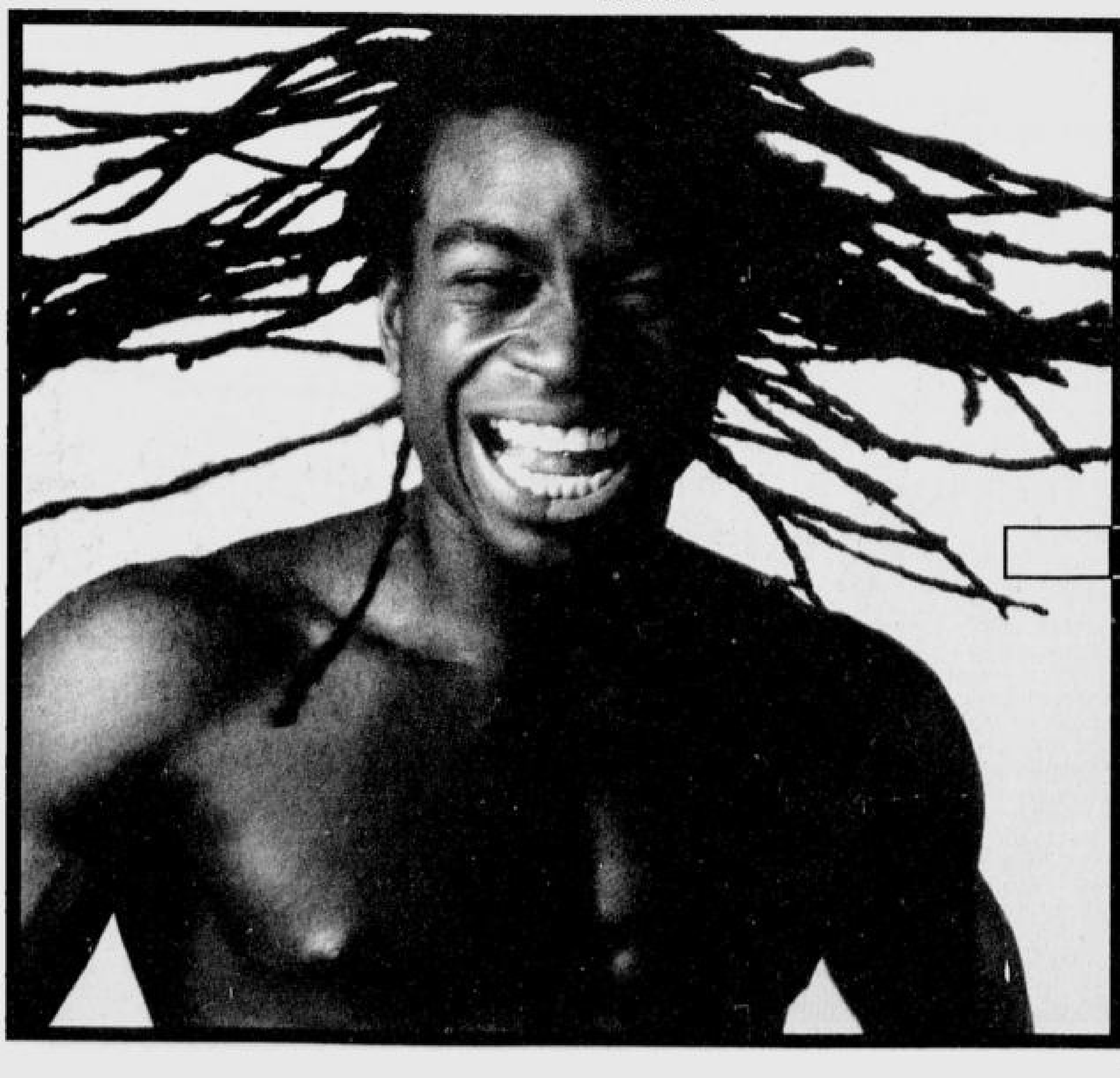
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PROEST PHILIPPINES, INC.

ISO 9002 CERTIFIED

"Our Race for Quality has no Finish Line"

CERTIFICATION INTERNATIONAL
ISO 9002

Messages

THE RECOGNITION and awarding of ISO 9002 certificate to PROEST PHILIPPINES, INC. is a milestone accomplishment in the history of the local shoe manufacturing industry.

This year will be remembered as a year of triumph, not only for PROEST Phils., Inc. but to the Province of Bulacan and the Country as well. Clearly the management and staff of PROEST Phils., Inc. has followed our province's proud tradition of outstanding performance in the shoe manufacturing industry. Your company's greatest accomplishment in the past years of bringing our province to the threshold of the knowledge economy through the pursuit of your programs, projects and various policies according to the company's vision has rightfully earned you due recognition.

I wish to extend my warm and heartfelt Congratulations to PROEST Phils., Inc. for their accomplishments and may you continue your commitment and zeal to stay competitive in the industry with a social conscience of service to the Filipino people.

Hon. REYLINA "NENENG" NICOLAS
Congresswoman, 4th District of Bulacan

MY WARMEST congratulations to PROEST PHILIPPINES, Inc.for achieving the standard of quality excellence set by ISO 9002 on the occasion of your 10th Year Anniversary celebration. This recognition is the first and only, in the shoe manufacturing industry in Bulacan.

For a decade, your shoe company has always been vying for excellence. This was manifested through your efforts, which made you achieve this recognition.

The Proest Philippines, Inc. where quality has always been a way of life hammered an achievement of excellence and pride not only for your company but also for the province and Bulacan's shoe manufacturing industry.

May your achievement inspire our business sector to continue to improve productivity so as to thrive in an environment ruled by global competition.

Congratulations! *Mabuhay ang Proest Philippines, Inc!*

Hon. JOSEFINA M. DELA CRUZ
Governor, Province of Bulacan

CONGRATULATIONS! PROEST Philippines, Inc. for having received an ISO Certificate last October 22, 2001 at Dakila, Malolos, Bulacan. This is indeed a feat to boast of. You have proven quality management system,, conforming to the standards of INTERNATIONAL CERTIFYING BODY. Furthermore, I also congratulate you on your 10th year anniversary for having a commendable local shoe manufacturing industry in our town.

Continue your good work and be an example to others. You are a pride of Meycauayan. Keep it up! God bless and Mabuhay!

Hon. EDUARDO A. ALARILLA
Municipal Mayor, Meycauayan

THE TESDA-GTZ Project through its Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program: "Qualification of the Workforce in the Philippine Shoe Industry" would like to commend and congratulate Proest Philippines, Inc. for having been awarded an ISO 9002 certificate last October 22, 2001.at Dakila, Malolos, Bulacan. The compliance with the requirements for the said certification was audited and vouched by *Certification International*, a highly acclaimed certification body.

For being the very first shoe manufacturing company to receive the ISO 9002 certification, Proest Philippines, Inc will continue to lead the way for other Philippine companies to aim for better quality services and products.

LUCITA S. LAZO
Director General, TESDA

HEINZ-DIETHER HARBERS
Project Manager, TESDA-GTZ Project

I WOULD like to congratulate PROEST Philippines, Inc. for being awarded the ISO 9002 certification of excellence as the first for the local shoe manufacturing industry.

As one of the active members of the Philippine Small and Medium Business Development Foundation (PHILSMED) a leading organization in promoting SME's in the Philippines PROEST Philippines, Inc. has given the SME industry the right signal to what should our entrepreneurs aspire for, and that is excellence in their craft acceptable to both local and international markets.

Let us face it, the market is tough and competitive and you have proven that Filipino entrepreneurs can maintain old worth tradition while setting new innovations and achieving local and international recognition.

Again, to the management and employees of PROEST Philippines, Inc. Congratulations and Mabuhay!

MINA GABOR
President, PHILSMED

IN BEHALF of the officials and staff of the Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC), I would like to congratulate Proest Phils., Inc. for gaining recognition as an ISO 9002-certified company, the first of its kind in the local shoe manufacturing industry.

It is indeed a fitting recognition for your company's efforts in uplifting the working conditions of its most valuable asset: it workers. Management and labor worked together in attaining the goals set by the company in the promotion of workplace safety and health. For as you look back to your efforts in becoming a major player in the development of the industry, you can take pride for missions accomplished and jobs well done.

In our small way, the OSHC had been doing its share in the endeavor to provide humane working conditions. We have done researchers and surveys for the industry. One is a Study on the Health Effects of Organic Solvents to determine the effects of organic solvents exposure to workers in the footwear industry. Managers, supervisors and workers from the various industry sectors, particularly, your sector, attended our trainings, seminars and for a on occupational safety and health. Likewise, local shoe manufacturers tested their products at our safety laboratory for its safeness and compliance to the Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS).

It is my fervent hope that you will not rest on your achievement. But, rather to continue to strive in realizing our ultimate goal: a world class Filipino worker.

Rest assured that the OSHC will always be supporting and assisting you in your endeavors for the promotion of a safe and healthy work environment.

Dr. DULCE P. ESTRELLA-GUST
Executive Director, OSHC

WE WISH to extend our warmest greetings and congratulations to the management and staff of Proest Philippines, Inc. on your certification to ISO 9002.

This International Standard on Quality Management System, ISO 9000, focuses on the way businesses are run and the processes that deliver quality products and services.

ISO 9000 is recognized as the international standard of best management practices.

With this recognition, you demonstrated top management involvement and commitment to Customer Satisfaction and the development and maintenance of an effective Quality Management System.

Neville-Clarke Philippines takes prides in having a partner like Proest Philippines Inc. a company dedicated to the ideals of quality and valued service.

Congratulations!

MELBA M. VALDEZ
President, Neville-Clarke Phils., Inc.

PLEASE accept our warmest greetings of Congratulations for being the first local shoe manufacturer to achieve ISO 9002 rating and our best wishes on the occasion of your 10th year anniversary.

Your achievement could not have come at a better time, not only bringing pride and honor to the Philippine Footwear Federation but, more importantly, in sending a message to the world that the Filipino can. So much have been said and argued about WTO and globalization and you have stepped up to the challenge and taken the bold, inevitable step of bringing your facilities to world-class standards. This is the mission of the PFFI and we are happy that you have the vision and can serve as a role model for our other small and thriving colleagues in the industry.

The race to quality has no finish line...indeed. But it has a starting line and it is every one of us manufacturers to be determined and committed, only then can we win in the race.

Sincerely yours,

ROGER S. PY
VP-Ext Affairs / Director General

LOLITO S. LOPEZ
President, PFFI

AS WE intensify our quest for the Professionalization and upliftment of the Philippine Products in preparation for the forthcoming tarde globalization, we at SOPI, as the prime mover in the development and promotion of safety and health environment, would like to acknowledge the recently concluded recognition and awarding of ISO 9002 certified to the PROEST Philippines, Inc. on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary, by the Certification International.

The Certification will truly boost the safety equipment industry in the country. Likewise, our enduring partnership in the upliftment of occupational safety and health will ultimately redound to the benefit and welfare of our industrial workers and the sustained growth of our industries.

M. Gen. MARIO C. TANCHANCO, MNSA (RET)
National President,SOPI

Company history and development

PROEST PHILIPPINES, INC. started out as KRISTHEL GLOVES and LEATHER PRODUCTS IN 1983, as a form of a "backyard" handicraft business, by spouses Donald and Thelma Esterban; employing a single help, two (2) units of sewing machines and an initial capital of Three thousand pesos. Their first product line was the manufacturing of industrial gloves made from denim materials.

In 1985, the enterprise added a new line by manufacturing industrial leather gloves, utilizing leather scraps from local tanners and shoe manufacturers. It was also in this year that they added two more sewing machines and two laborers.

The gradual acquisition of 72 units of industrial sewing machines, being distributed to its subcontractors in Bulacan and Pampanga, saw the expansion of the company in 1988.

Its first break into shoe design and manufacturing came as result of the insistence of one of its dealers with an initial order of four hundred (400) pairs of Safety Shoes. The management was hesitant at first due to lack of technical expertise, but was convinced by a close associate to give it a try. Though unsuccessful in its first venture because of product deficiencies, the general manager was not discouraged. Instead, he intensified all efforts by reading books and magazines and sent out inquiries regarding various materials; doing intensive research, observations through his travels and attending trainings and seminars to gather technical knowledge with steel toe caps, counter materials, soles, shoe last, steel plates and other shoe components. He laboriously and continuously searched for the industry's new technologies and latest machineries. Thus, on September 5, 1991 Proest Philippines, Inc. was formally incorporated.

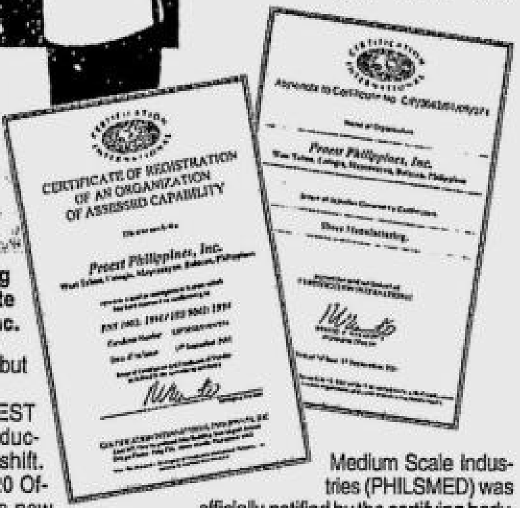
In 1994, big bulk of orders from Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils., Inc. was sealed; thereby developing in the process, the dealer-supplier customer relationship on a higher level and a more professional status.

In 1995, San Miguel Brewing Division joined the elite line of company clients along with, Manila Water, MAGSAYSAY Maritime Corporation, Philippine Long Distance Telecommunication, among others.

In 1999, PROEST PHILIPPINES INC., offered 'Product Liability Insurance' of U.S. 100,000 DOLLARS. At present, Proest Phils., Inc. boast of several and different brands to choose from. It manufactures exclusively owned and registered brands to the Intellectual Property Office of the Department of Trade and Industry. These are JOBMASTER, FOOTSHIELD, FOOTGARD, GARDWELL I & II, THELDON SECURITE, BILTRITE, WOLVERLINE and DONNER. It is imperative and he believes that it is adamant for a company to continuously improve to stay competitive, not only in style, workmanship, but most of all, affordability.

The Race To Quality Has N

Engr. Donald B. Esterban, Jr. being conratulated by Mr. Renato Navarrete of Certification International Phils., Inc.



CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF AN ORGANIZATION OF ASSESSED CAPABILITY

Proest Philippines, Inc.

From its humble beginnings, PROEST Philippines Inc., now has a daily production capacity of 750 pairs per 8 hours shift. Currently employs 100 laborers and 20 Office personnel's in its workplace at its new plant at West Tabon, Caingin, town of Meycauayan, province of Bulacan, and currently train workers on a fully mechanized plant, and aims to be the leader in its line of endeavor by the turn of the decade.

These are not considered accomplishments yet, nor we will rest on these laurels, if they are recognized. For here in our company our motto is: " Our race for quality has no finish line"

ISO BRIEF

Motivated by its vision to be globally competitive, PROEST PHILLIPINES, INC. headed by its President, Engr. Donald B. Esterban, Jr. decided to put up a quality system based on the requirements of ISO 9002 Standards. In September of 1999, the company employed the services of Neville Clarke Phils., Inc. an affiliate of Neville Clarke U.K. as its consultant.

The company immediately formed technical and steering committees and sent personnel to the different training and seminars to be equipped with what ISO is all about. Insights received from these training and seminars were passed on to the rank and file employees.

After two (2) years of rigid trainings, seminars, documentation, system implementation, consultations and series of internal quality and performed by its Certified IQA's, the company finally submitted itself for a compliance audit.

On September 6 & 7, Certification International Phils., Inc. an affiliate of Certification International U.K. conducted the two-day compliance audit. Thus, on September 17 of this year, (2001); PROEST PHILIPPINES, INC., a member of Philippine Footwear Federation, Inc. (PFFI) and Philippine Small and Medium Scale Industries (PHILSMED) was officially notified by the certifying body, the status as an ISO 9002 certified company in time for the 10th year Anniversary of the company.

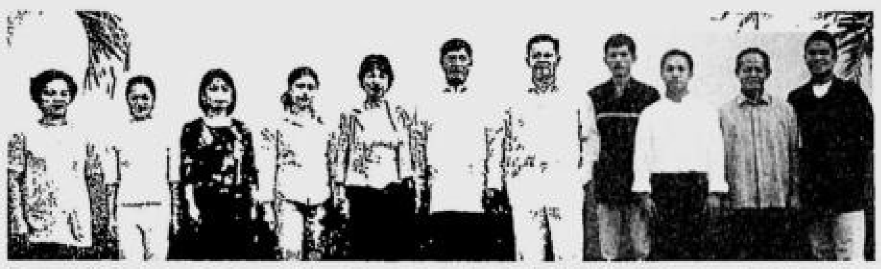
Being a certified to ISO 9002 , the company's efforts doesn't stop here. Its motto "OUR RACE TO QUALITY HAS NO FINISH LINE". Surely, the ISO 9002 Certification for PROEST Philippines., Inc. is just the start and a take-off point in meeting and facing the challenges of our time squarely.

AS PRESIDENT of the newly ISO 9002 Certified company, I would like to congratulate and commend the management, staff and the entire personnel which comprise this shoe manufacturing corporation, for achieving and making a break through for our entity as well as for the shoe industry of our country.

The entry of the company in the manufacturing of Industrial Safety Footwear was merely accidental. But over the years, with constant research development and upgrading of its technical skills and production expertise, it has managed to grow into one of the leader and stalwarts in the shoe-manufacturing sector. Proof that with determination and foresight strategies and business acumen, it can achieve goals and over come insurmountable obstacles, deterrent to its growth. True to the fact, that the company has paved the way, that others may emulate, by initiating efforts and corporate values to achieve the target in ten years time. By institutionalizing quality management and performance, leading to the certification of an ISO 9002, you have demonstrated the dynamism suited for global competitiveness, ready to face the challenges of the ever expanding market, thus making the company truly world class.

Thus, it is very timely, that on its 10th year, the company received such recognition. A salute to the Filipino's industriousness, service and management quality and flexibility. With the advent of the coming holiday season, I would like to share this award to the Filipino entrepreneurs and craftsmen. To our clients, suppliers, dealers and other partners in the business, our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for your patronage and trust. Thank you very much. Wishing you all the best!

Engr. DONALD B. ESTERBAN, Jr.
President



Power Management headed by Engr. Esterban, Jr. (Center) Thelma R. Esterban, Marketing Manager (5th from left); Elmer M. Rebong, Mfg. Mgr. (5th from right).

The fully mechanized plant in Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan

Dynamic workforce of Proest Phils., Inc.

QUALITY POLICY

PROEST PHILS., INC is committed to maintain quality leadership in the footwear industry. In support of this commitment, it shall:

- Provide products and services that will consistently meet or exceed industry and customer requirements at optimum costs, and
- Develop and harness the full potential of every employee
- Operate a quality system that shall ensure continuous growth and improvement for the company's stability.

Everyone in the company shall see to it that the overall objectives are supported, coordinated and maintained at all levels.

Everyone shall be a living testimony of all our products and services. Our product shall speak well of the quality of every individual.

Greetings from:
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DTI to assess impact of rate cuts on SMEs

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry will conduct a detailed survey on the interest rate payments of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and export manufacturers to assess whether they have benefited from the series of reduction in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' key policy rates this year.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II has ordered a "stratified survey" on the actual loan rates being paid by SMEs and exporters to banks. The respondents would be grouped according to their sizes and their sectors.

Roxas said this was meant to gauge more effectively the impact of the Monetary Board's policy actions on interest rates versus the actual rates charged by banks.

Roxas is apparently concerned that the SMEs and exporters have not been benefiting from the interest rate cuts implemented by the Monetary Board. The observation was based on the persistent complaints expressed by the business sector on the difficulty in convincing banks to grant them more loans not only because they were expensive, but also because of the prudent limits imposed by the BSP.

Roxas is a member of the BSP's policy making body, which has slashed key interest rates by 13 times this year for a total of 725 basis points since December last year. The BSP's overnight borrowing and lending rates are now on their six-year lows. The rates are expected to drop to lower depths with the scheduled reduction in the reserve requirements on banks that would unleash more liquidity in the system.

The interest rate cuts, which mirrored the Federal Reserve Board's move to stimulate the US economy, are meant to provide distressed corporations relief from high interest expenses and to stimulate spending on white line items and other capital goods by both the consumers and businesses.

New oil players urged to help fight smuggling

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BUSINESSMAN Raul Concepcion last week urged new oil firms to take the initiative to stop oil smuggling and the unaccounted sale of duty-free oil products shipped in through the export zones.

"They should take the initiative to police their own ranks because they are the ones who really know what has been going on in the field," Concepcion said.

Concepcion, who chairs the private sector Consumer and Oil Price Watch, added that the industry should look into the unaccounted sale of petroleum products that have been coming in through the country's export zones such as the Subic Freeport.

"Business should be proactive in fulfilling their commitment as stakeholders in the recent economic summit," Concepcion said.

He underscored the importance of such moves to the economic recovery of the country.

He also said the oil companies, in cooperation with concerned government agencies, should set up a special task force to monitor the smuggling activities in the industry.

Early this year, the Department of Energy said it would investigate allegations that two new oil players were involved in the smuggling of oil and petroleum products.

The report came in the wake of a Far Eastern Economic Review report saying that about 20,000 to 40,000 barrels of diesel, fuel oil and kerosene a day are spirited out of Indonesia in a massive smuggling operation.

In an issue last April, the magazine identified the Philippines as one of the destinations of the said Indonesian oil.

The DOE said the smugglers evade the 3-percent import duty as well as the specific taxes, giving them undue advantage over the country's three local refiners and legitimate importers.

Also, the smugglers are also said to be endangering human lives and the environment because they do not use the proper equipment in handling the products.

In August, a composite team of operatives from the DOE and the National Bureau of Investigation apprehended the crew of a tank truck and a storage barge suspected of illegally bringing in diesel fuel from Indonesia.

The DOE reported that the cargo was being sold at P1 lower than the prevailing pump prices.

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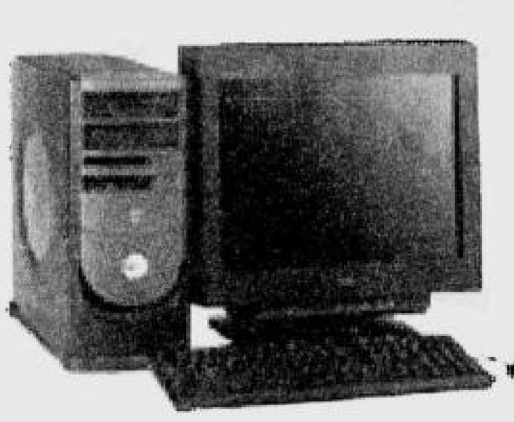

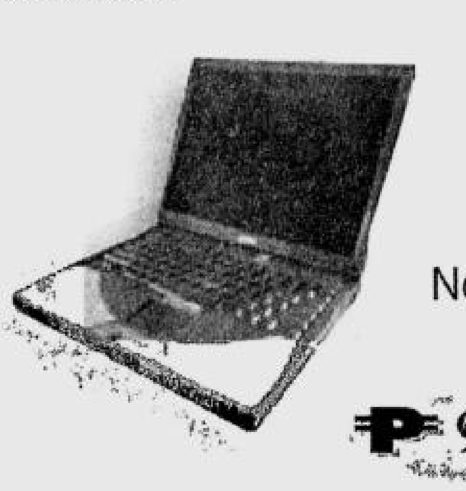

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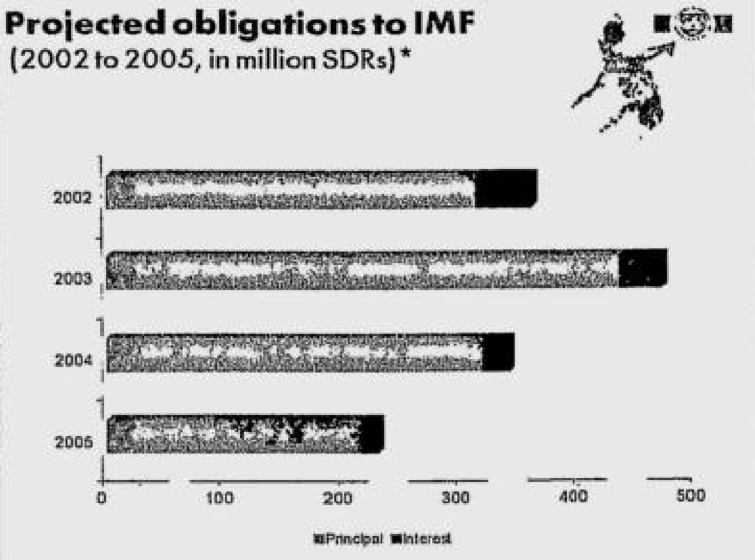
INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Projected obligations to IMF
(2002 to 2005, in million SDRs)*



*Special Drawing Rights (SDR-IMF's unit of account) = $1.26 (as of November 2001)

Source: International Monetary Fund

THE PHILIPPINES' obligations to the International Monetary Fund are projected to reach SDR 360.2 million or about $453.9 million in 2002. Over 80 percent of this amount represents the principal. In 2003, obligations are expected to reach SDR 470.4 million then fall to SDR 341.8 million in 2004. The country's outstanding debt to the IMF stood at SDR 1.6 billion as of end-October 2001.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

DoE opposes plan to raise taxes on petroleum products

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ENERGY Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. is strongly opposing a proposal to raise taxes on oil products, which, he said, ran counter to the government's deregulation policy.

"Such a move will defeat the purpose of the oil deregulation law which is to give the consumers competitive prices that are dictated by free market forces," Perez said.

The International Monetary Fund last week recommended increases in specific taxes on finished petroleum products as a means to raise revenues for the 2002 national budget.

According to Department of Energy data, the current specific taxes on the products are as follow:

- premium gasoline, P5.35/liter;
- unleaded gasoline, P4.35/liter;
- diesel, P1.63/ liter;
- kerosene, P0.60/liter;
- bunker fuel, P0.30/liter; and
- aviation fuel, P3.67/liter.

The secretary said that the better way to beef up the national budget was to equalize the taxes on indigenous fuels like geothermal and natural gas and those on imported fossil fuels.

"The current taxes on local fuel, Perez said, are more expensive relative to imported fuel considering that their (local fuel) sources are still being developed," Perez said.

In an earlier interview, Energy Undersecretary Cyril del Callar said that, as reflected in power generation, taxes on diesel and bunker fuel accounted for 8 centavos per kilowatthour while those on geothermal and natural gas were pegged at 30 centavos per kwh and 42 centavos per kwh, respectively.

Del Callar said the energy department was pushing for a reduction in the taxes on local fuels used in power generation to promote new and renewable energy sources.

He added that the reduction would equalize the taxes on local and imported fuels as mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

"We are exploring all options and we are awaiting all inputs and recommendations from the Department of Finance on how to effect this equalization," Del Callar said.

The undersecretary explained further that duties on geothermal and other indigenous fuels were set in the early '70s.

The restructuring of the oil industry resulted in a uniform 3-percent tariff on petroleum imports.

"Taxes on crude and petroleum products went down, which resulted in a distortion in the taxes on local and imported fuel," Del Callar said.

PEREZ JR.

GOINGS-ON

Ortiz-Luis is new PCCI head

THE Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) elected the new members of its board during its annual meeting on Dec. 7 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., Philexport president and Urban Bank chair, was unanimously elected PCCI president for 2002.

Also during the meeting, outgoing PCCI president Miguel Varela was named chair of the organization's board.

MSI launched

THE MICROFINANCE Success Institute (MSI), the first microfinance institute in the country, was launched on Dec. 6 at the Philippine Christian University.

The launch was highlighted by the signing of the memorandum of agreement by the establishing organizations such as the Alliance of Philippine Partners in Enterprise Development Inc., Opportunity Microfinance Bank and the Philippine Christian University.

MSI was established to strengthen and institutionalize the microfinance sector in the Philippines by stimulating the growth of micro and small entrepreneurs. In MSI, the microfinance principles and best practices gleaned from years of experience will be integrated to the formal education system, thus producing trained microfinance professionals with a better understanding of poverty and are equipped as well with practice and workable solutions to poverty.

Kenny Rogers' RP unit starts selling franchises

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER establishing a strong operational base here and becoming the most successful Kenny Rogers Roasters business unit in the world, Roasters Philippines Inc., operator of the food chain in the country, is finally opening its doors to franchising.

In a statement over the weekend, the restaurant chain said it would soon start selling franchises. There are at present 34 Roasters branches nationwide.

The fast-food chain operator had shelved a plan to sell franchises earlier due to lack of the necessary support systems for prospective franchisees.

After thoroughly studying the market situation in the country, Roasters now feels ready to sell the name to interested entities.

Over the past six years of operations in the Philippines, the food chain operator has exerted effort to test its manuals and processes for the efficient operation of a food business.

These processes include those governing operations, training, marketing, product development, commissary support, purchasing and logistics, human resources and information technology.

Roasters wants to provide utmost support to its franchisees, unlike other food or non-food franchisors that just leave their franchisees to operate and function by themselves without the proper orientation and training.

The food chain operator said there were good market opportunities in Bulacan, Cabanatuan, Tarlac, Angeles City, Pangasinan, Olongapo, Batangas, Tagaytay, Laguna, Cavite, Lucena, Cebu and Bacolod for potential franchisees.

It currently has 28 stores all over Metro Manila, with another six outlets in Lipa City, SM Bacoor, SM Iloilo, SM San Fernando, Gaisano Mall Davao and SM Davao. Out of these, only two are franchised.

A Baguio franchise will be opening in a few weeks, bringing the year-end store tally to 35 all over the country.

Kenny Rogers Roasters was one of the first to introduce the "fast-casual" dining concept in the country which provides customers fast service with food quality surpassing those of regular fast-food chains.

Its target market includes the middle-class and professionals, with prices suited to working-class wallets.

Dollar T-bill issue raises $125M for gov't

By Clarissa S. Batino

CITIBANK affiliate Citicorp Capital Phils. has raised $125 million for the national government through the issuance of a one-year, first-of-its-kind, dollar-denominated treasury bills.

The fresh borrowing will be used by the Macapagal administration in beefing up next year's budget. It brought to $531 million the total foreign funds raised by the government so far. The government needs to raise a total of $1.4 billion in foreign funds to meet next year's budget.

Citicorp Capital said the borrowing it had underwritten was 25 percent more than the original amount of $100 million mandated by the government. The exercise was oversubscribed on account of strong investors' interest.

Tagged as a breakthrough transaction, the maiden issue of the dollar treasury bills represents the Philippine government's foray into an untapped liquidity of the onshore dollar deposits, said Citibank.

The issue was priced at about 2.5 percentage points over the one-year London Interbank Offered Rate and should be lower than the one-year rate for dollar-denominated Philippine sovereign bonds.

Citicorp said it has the largest market share of Foreign Currency Deposit Unit (FCDU) investors and was, therefore, uniquely positioned to underwrite and arrange this groundbreaking transaction. The success of this deal, it said, also highlighted Citicorp's presence in the Philippines. The Citibank group has been in the country for 99 years.

The dollar treasuries will be issued through the banks' foreign currency deposit units, making the issue the first dollar-denominated government security to be offered to onshore dollar investors.

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Domestic liquidity grew 9.9% in Oct.–BSP

By Clarissa S. Batino

CONFIRMING the need for the government to unload more money into the system, domestic liquidity, or M3, grew by an annual 9.9 percent in October, down from a growth of 10.57 percent in September, figures from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

M3 consists of money in circulation, demand deposits, peso savings and time deposits or quasi-money and deposit substitutes held by the general public.

"This continued moderation in M3 growth since June can be traced, in part, to subdued lending activity of banks as well as weak corporate demand for new borrowings in the face of excess capacity in the economy," the central bank said in a statement.

Domestic money supply grew 11.1 percent in August on the year and 11.9 percent in July.

Year-on-year growth in net domestic credits of the monetary system slowed to only 0.9 percent in October from 2.2 percent in September.

The central bank said the slowdown in private sector credits was due mainly to commercial bank caution given the uncertainties and soft demand by companies for new loans.

It noted that the average capacity utilization of manufacturing firms declined further to 77 percent in September from 78.6 percent in August.

"This has enabled continued production by firms without need for additional bank financing," the central bank said.

The central bank said it was expecting the recent cut in overnight rates to help bring down the cost of borrowing and the Christmas season to encourage spending.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas cut its overnight interest rates on Thursday by 25 basis points to match the move by the US Federal Reserve.

The rate cut, effective since Friday, reduces the overnight borrowing rate to 7.75 percent, the lowest since September 1995. The overnight lending rate will be 10 percent.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said by year's end, growth in domestic liquidity should hit 11 percent following a decision by monetary authorities two weeks ago to cut their reserve requirements by two percentage points to 18 percent.

In the coming year, Buenaventura said, domestic liquidity would be allowed to grow by as much as 13 percent to support the requirements of the economy given expectations of a modest inflation.

RESTRUCTURING PLAN

NFA to sell idle assets

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE NATIONAL Food Authority said it would soon start disposing of its idle and underutilized assets.

NFA Administrator Anthony Abad said that the agency has started consolidating its assets for appraisal and disposal. He said that an asset management plan would be drafted for the agency soon.

Abad said that among the assets that would be sold included idle pieces of land, some of NFA's 315 warehouses, mills and dryers. The facilities were acquired in the 1970s and are no longer fully used now.

"We are now in the process of consolidation. The next step is the appraisal. We have not identified the property management consultant. The Food Terminal Institute may be tasked to take the lead. We have to finalize all these," Abad said in a news conference last week.

The sale of NFA's assets forms part of the agency's restructuring program. In line with this, the agency will also start allowing farmers' groups to import rice early next year.

"As per the instruction of the President, the monopoly in rice importation of the NFA will be withdrawn and that farmers' groups will be among those who will be authorized to import rice when need arises," Abad said.

Although rice importation will no longer be solely NFA's role, Abad said the government agency will still perform its role of securing the national buffer stock at 750,000 metric tons.

Authorized importers will be issued permits that will indicate the specific ports of origin. These permits will only be given during lean seasons, usually from March to August, and will be valid for 90 days.

Resins firms see ₱2-B . . .

(From page B3)

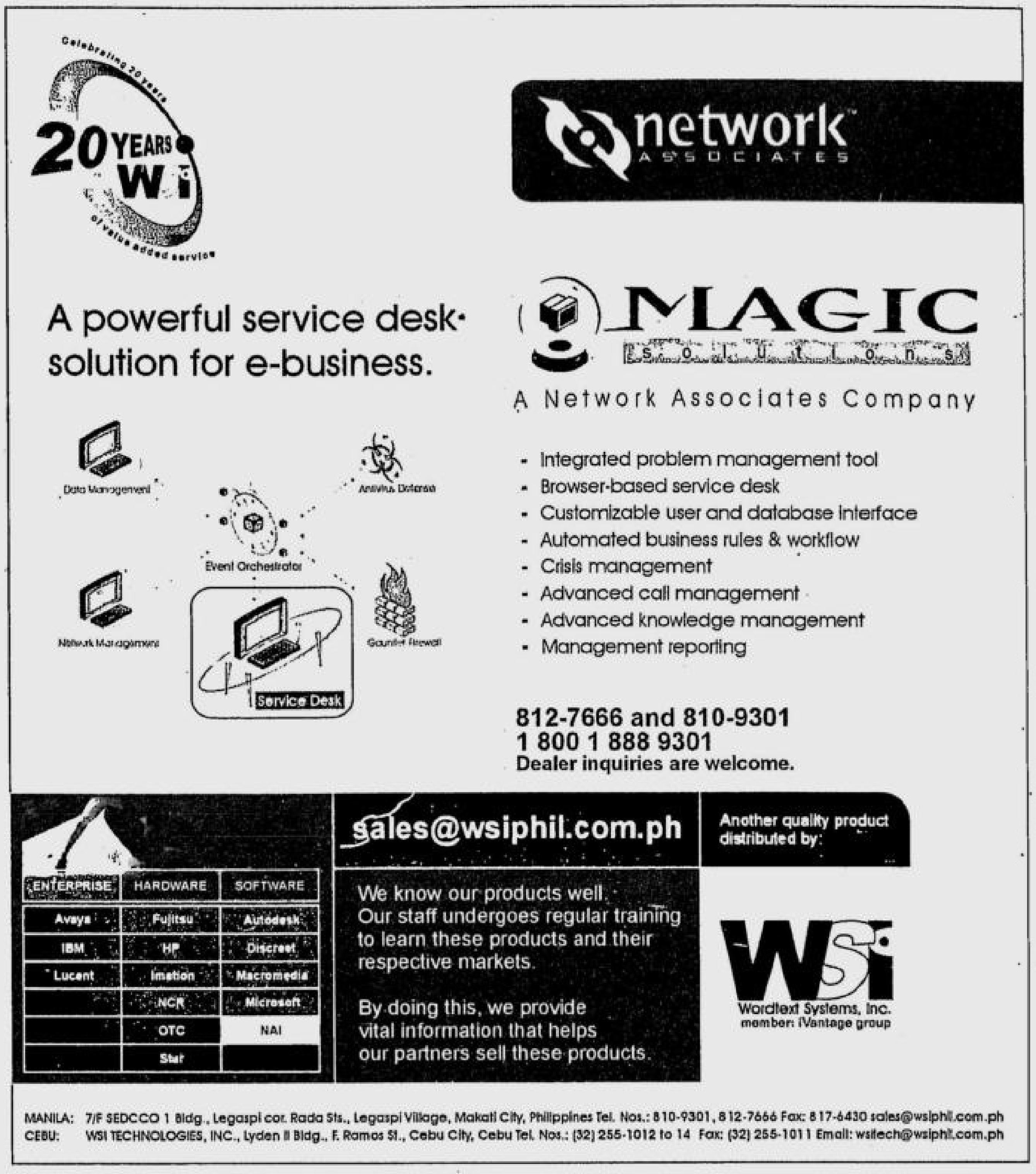
so far this year even though exports have been slumping throughout 2001. The Department of Trade and Industry had earlier reported that petrochemical manufacturers were operating at less than 40 percent of their capacity because of the influx of smuggled polymers.

Paras said the smuggled resins have a substantial 25-percent cost advantage over makers of polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP) because they do not pay the 10-percent value-added tax and the 15-percent duty. He said that the smuggling of resins was not only gobbling up the market share of legitimate industry players but also depriving the government of much needed revenues.

The APMP is urging the government to clamp down on CBW operations by mandating all importers of PE and PP to get prior clearance from the Board of Investments before bringing in their goods. Paras noted that smuggling of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is not as rampant as the other polymers because of this shipping requirement. Imports account for only 10 percent of total PVC sales in the country compared with 70 percent for PE and PP sales.

Also, the APMP wanted the Bureau of Customs to impose criminal sanctions against smugglers. At present, Paras said smugglers caught by the BOC were penalized by paying only the right duties on their items without any criminal liability. "This is a big incentive for smuggling because there are no penalties for those who will be caught," Paras said.

Paras said the termination of Societe Generale, Surveillance's contract to provide pre-shipment inspection services has contributed to the rise in smuggling in the country. Since the government is reluctant to tap a third-party inspector for imports, Paras said the APMP and other private companies were willing to shoulder the cost of getting an inspection firm. "It is a small price to pay for the benefit that we can get in terms of curbing smuggling."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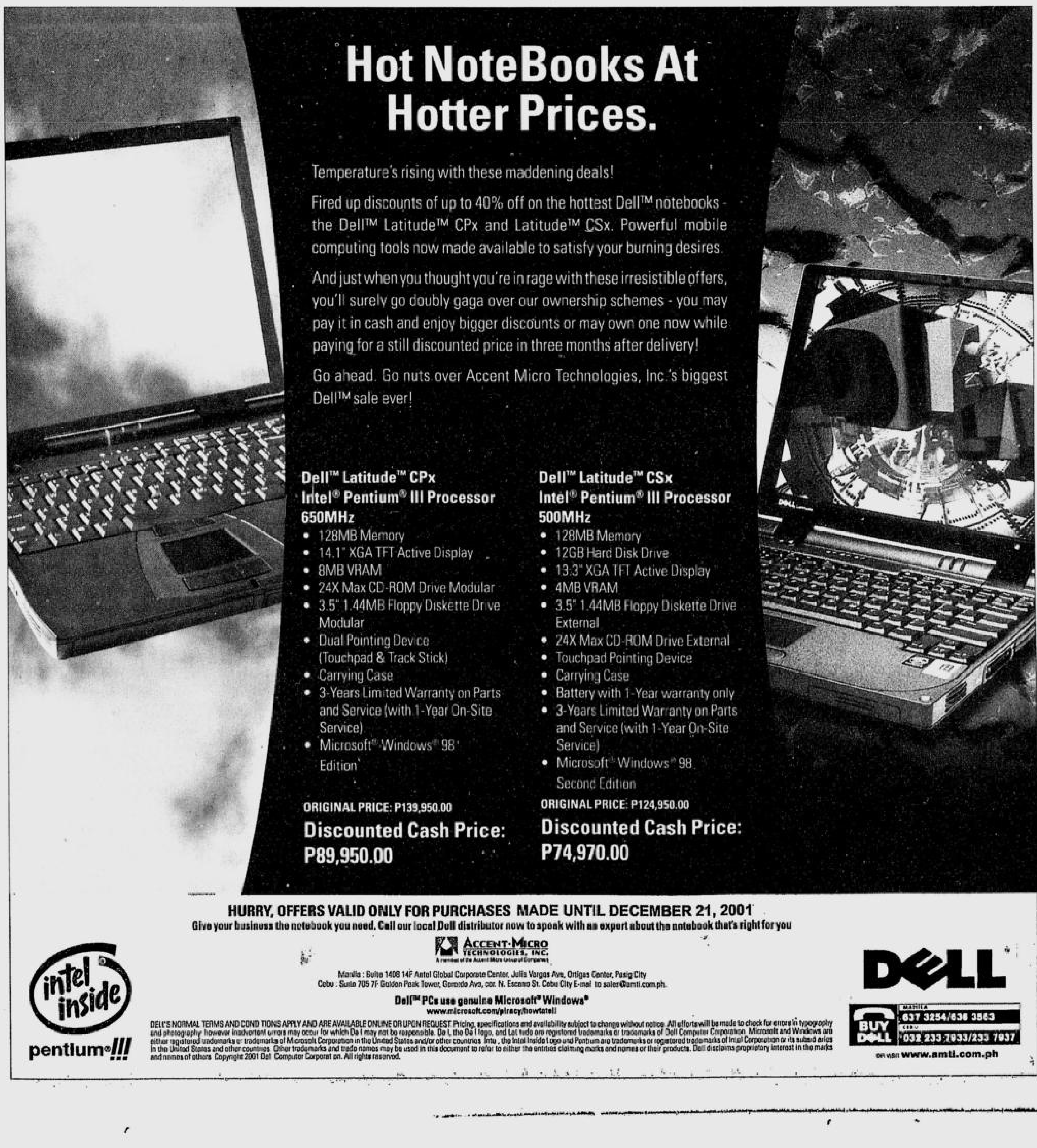
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Gov't seen posting lower deficit next year

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE MACAPAGAL administration may sustain a lower deficit of only P112 billion next year if the Senate makes good on its threat to slash the national budget by P18 billion.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said in a news briefing that the government could post a deficit lower than this year's projected P145 billion should the Senate pursue a planned P18-billion cut in next year's expenditures.

The Senate, according to the budget chief, wanted to slash next year's P754.3-billion programmed expenditure by P18 billion.

Earlier reports said lawmakers were keen on reducing the P57-billion national defense budget and the P18-billion allocation for the Agriculture and Fishery Modernization Act.

Boncodin said the government, if possible, would like to preserve its allocation for the projects specifically mentioned by President Macapagal-Arroyo during her State of the Nation Address as well as for farm modernization.

Among the priorities mentioned in the President's Sona were housing and job creation, particularly in agriculture.

Boncodin said the government was confident it would meet its P145-billion deficit target this year on account of an improved revenue collection and modest spending.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue is expected to meet its revised collection target of P388 billion this year. The Department of Finance said as of November, the BIR had wiped out an almost P3-billion shortfall from previous months.

The Bureau of Customs is also seen meeting its revenue target of P105 billion this year.

Boncodin said the government was hoping to register a surplus of P6 billion this month, citing healthy earnings alongside lower spending.

The budget department, she said, would not disburse any more funds except the salaries of government workers for December. She said the expenditures should also post P6 billion worth of savings for the year.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho had said that even without the P10-billion remittance of the Philippine Estates Authority, the government would be able to meet its deficit target.

The dividends from the PEA out of the planned sale of its P15-billion, 60-hectare property from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. was supposed to replace a programmed P10-billion revenue from privatization.

"I think we can meet the deficit target this year even without the dividends from PEA," Camacho said.

Sy, Alcantara in list of PNB prexy candidates

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE GOVERNMENT is considering including International Exchange Bank chair Ramon Sy and Philippine Bank of Communications president Isidro Alcantara in its list of possible candidates for the post of Philippine National Bank president.

A source familiar with the matter said the government had already identified some of the directors and officers who would take over the reins of PNB, the country's sixth largest bank.

Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. president Norberto Nazareno last week said former Asianbank president Eduard Go would replace him as chair of PNB.

Nazareno, former Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. president Francisco Dizon and former Far East Bank and Trust Co. executive vice president Vicente Panlilio will stay on as members of the board.

Nazareno said the government and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan would sign next week a plan detailing the conversion plan for the P25-billion emergency loan extended to PNB by PDIC and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas late last year.

Tan would choose the president from a roster of names to be submitted by the government. Under the agreement with Tan, the government would nominate the chair of the board, chair of the executive committee, chief financial officer, corporate secretary and the deputy general counsel.

Tan will have the right to appoint four members to the PNB board and one independent director as well as the general counsel, assistant corporate secretary and deputy chief finance officer.

PDIC and Tan have agreed to convert into equity P7.8 billion out of the government's total P25 billion in outstanding loans to PNB. The conversion will be at P40 a share and will bring the government's and the group of Tan's stakes in the bank to 44.98 percent each.

Another integral component of the rehabilitation package is the offsetting of up to P10 billion in PNB's loans to government through a payment-in-kind arrangement and the restructuring of the balance of P6.1 billion over a 10-year period at one percent over treasury bill rates.

PNB earlier paid P1.1 billion out of its total loans.

The government and Tan's group have also agreed, in principle, on an exit mechanism, whereby, at the appropriate time, they shall jointly sell their combined shares.

PNB posted a net loss of P1.42 billion in the third quarter of this year to bring up its accumulated loss in the first nine months to P5.346 billion, far larger than the P1.43 billion net loss incurred during the same nine-month period last year.

In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, PNB attributed the large net loss during the first nine months to P2.11 billion in interest expense on borrowing from government and additional loan loss provisions of P2.176 billion.

PNB noted that its deposits rose by 4 percent or P4.7 billion to P123.9 billion as of the end of September from end-2000 primarily because of the bank's increase in private deposits.

The bank's consolidated resources fell slightly to P191 billion or P1.1 billion lower than the P192.4 billion posted end of last year.

SEC tightens rules on articles of incorporation

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has moved to expedite the revocation of companies' certificates of incorporation if they fail to meet requirements of the commission.

The commission approved the revision of a form so that it now required a corporate treasurer to certify that the payment for subscription to the company's paid-up capital was received and deposited with a bank.

The treasurer also authorized the SEC and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to verify the bank deposit.

"Post-audit of bank accounts of corporations show that there are some who have no deposit or they just submit spurious bank certificates," the SEC said.

The treasurer must also agree that the company will waive its right to a notice and hearing for the revocation of the certificate of incorporation in case the paid-up capital has not been deposited or has been withdrawn prior to approval of the articles of incorporation.

The SEC has also revised the general information sheet so that a portion should be filled out to indicate the percentage of a company's foreign equity.

"This is necessary to easily determine if the corporation complies with the foreign equity limitation provided by the Constitution and special laws regarding nationalized or partially nationalized industries," the SEC said.

Elena R. Torrijos

RP seen getting more grants from Europe

APART from being part of a 22-million-euro civil aviation grant for South and Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines could expect to receive more grants in the next three to four years from the European Union.

"Our traditional grants are more for social development, but we would be focusing more on economic cooperation, more on bridging gaps between Europe and its partner countries," Yves Gazzo, head of the EU Delegation of the European Commission in the Philippines, said.

Gazzo said the country could expect another round of grants to fund projects related to the academe, health care, corporate governance and security.

He added that the European Union currently had 12 major rural development projects in the country and in other parts of Asia.

These would be consolidated into one major project per year worth around 10 million to 20 million euros each.

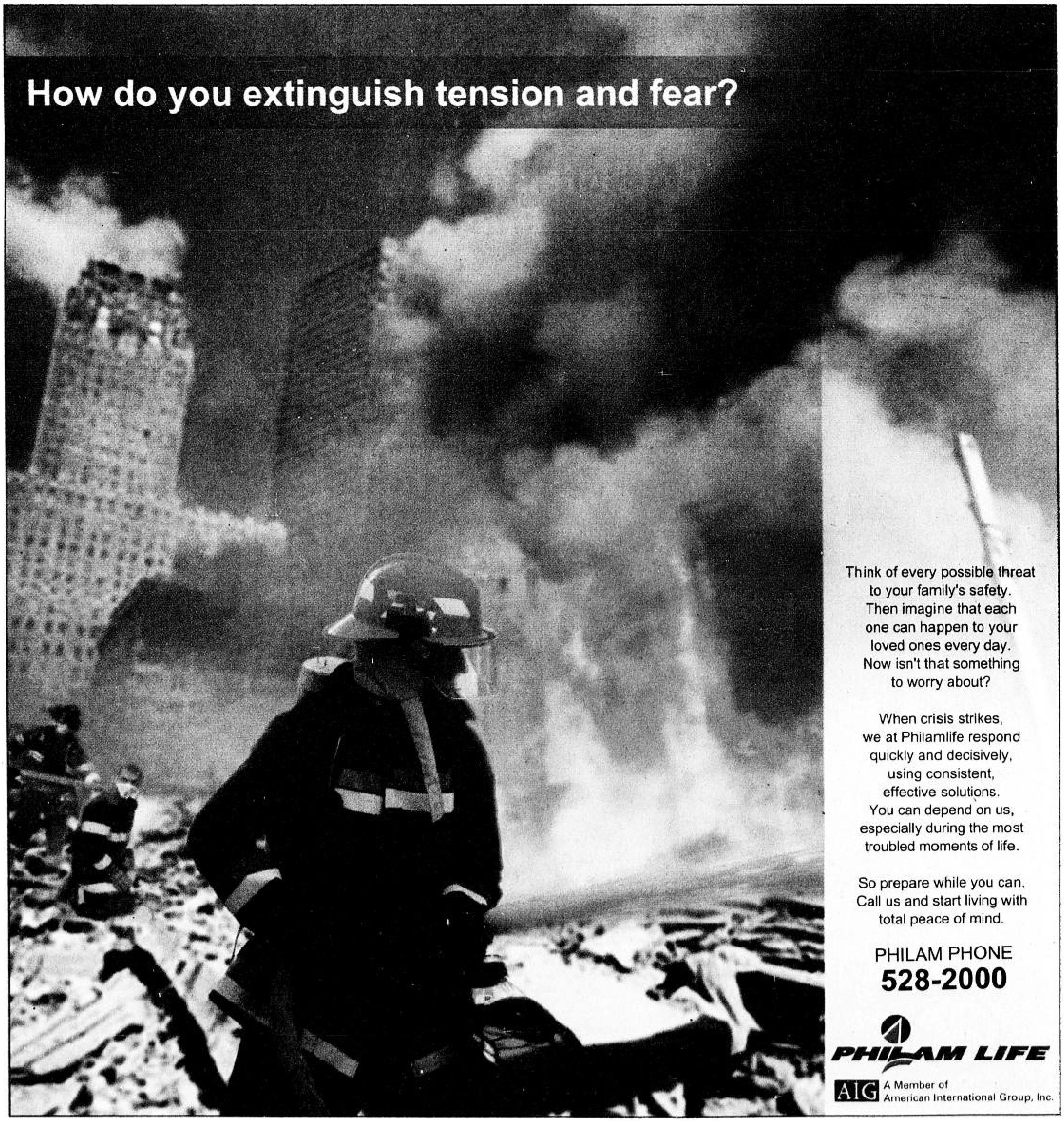
Gazzo said the European Union would "reduce involvement in rural development activities" and divert its attention to more economic activities.

He said the activities that the European Union would support would be more "diversified" in the sense that they would cater to people from all walks of life.

"(We'll be giving) more assistance to specific fields, like health care. We're already helping a hospital in Agoo, La Union. Corporate governance is also another field. In this country, there are only a few entities that own big companies. We'll help other (entities) join the competition," he said.

He added that the European Union would establish more programs that would send Filipino students from the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University to European universities through exchange programs.

Gazzo said this would help broaden the students' horizons as well as help them learn from cultures other than their own. What they learn during their stay in Europe, they could use when they return to the country.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Napocor lawyers get relief

THE SUPREME Court has ordered the Office of the Ombudsman to stop from enforcing a six-month preventive suspension of two National Power Corp. lawyers involved in an alleged P506-million land scam.

Lawyers Catherine Pablo and Comie Doromal have reassumed their positions in Napocor on the basis of a temporary restraining order, their counsel, Victoriano Orocio, told the INQUIRER.

"The TRO, which was issued on Nov. 19, also restrains the fact-finding and investigation bureau, and the resident Ombudsman in Napocor from continuing with the administrative and criminal probe against Pablo and Doromal," Orocio said.

He added that the restraining order would be effective "until further notice of the court."

Last September, the INQUIRER reported that Pablo and Doromal were suspended in connection with an alleged P506-million land scam.

The two were accused of being involved in an anomalous compromise agreement for the payment of certain lands for the state firm's expanded Dasmariñas substation.

In a related development, outgoing Napocor president Jesus Alcordo was charged with plunder before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Alcordo is being accused of ordering the allegedly anomalous release of P470 million in Napocor funds to "bribe" the past Congress to pass the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

The case was filed by the Crusaders Against Graft and Corruption in NPC, a watchdog group of Napocor employees.

In October, an anonymous source told the INQUIRER that "congressmen received between P2.5 million and P5 million during the last few days when the passage of the (then) power bill was being pushed (from late May to early June this year)."

UNANIMOUS OPINION

US seen shaking recession shackles in 2002

WASHINGTON—The high-flying US economy came back to earth with a thud in 2001, but economists expect it to struggle back upward in the year ahead as it shakes off its first recession in a decade.

Opinion is virtually unanimous that the world's largest economy will regain its footing in 2002 and resume its upswing. For most economists, it's just a question of when and how strong the recovery will be.

Bush administration officials say a recession "trough" or bottom likely was reached in the current fourth quarter, but private sector analysts are more cautious.

But for now, the economy is dealing with a miserable toll of unemployment and displacement at the end of a record expansion that has run since the 1990-91 recession. More than a million jobs have vanished since this recession began in March—many of them from the economic impact of the Sept. 11 attacks—driving unemployment to a six-year high of 5.7 percent in November. The jobless rate is forecast to keep climbing.

"Recovery some time in 2002 is highly likely," economist Allen Sinai of Decision Economics Inc. in Boston said, but he predicted a rising number of Americans would find themselves in the ranks of the jobless for some months to come.

In each of nine previous recessions since the end of World War II, 2 million jobs were lost, suggesting the current job drain would extend for another five to six months.

Time for adjustment

That means that 2002 may be "a transition year" at best, Sinai said. "It looks like 2003 will be the really good year," he added.

The character of a US recovery is unclear not only because of events at home but also because the global economy is in one of its sharpest downturns since the 1980s. The United States will not get any air beneath its wings from trade with recession-wracked Japan or teetering Europe.

"There is a complex interplay of positive and negative forces in play that will determine when (growth begins) and suggest a soft recovery—a slow liftoff much like the recovery and the aftermath of the 1990-91 downturn," Sinai said, a view widely shared by those in the forecasting community.

The expansion that began in March 1991 and ended exactly 10 years later started slowly and even included a contraction in the first quarter of 1993. But then it took wing and generated millions of jobs on the back of an investment-fueled boom sparked by the information technology revolution.

Many of the conditions seen as vital for recovery are in place in the United States.

Interest rates are at 40-year lows after one of the Federal Reserve's most aggressive rate-cutting campaigns ever, in which it brought its key federal funds rate down to 1-3/4 percent.

The US central bank lowered rates 11 times by an exceptionally large 4-3/4 percentage points, leaving real or inflation-adjusted rates near or below zero, depending upon the measure of price rises used.

World energy costs are lower than they were a year ago, mortgage refinancings spurred by falling interest rates have put money in consumers' pockets and the Bush administration successfully pushed through a record $1.3-trillion tax-cut program early in 2001.

Both monetary and fiscal policy tools were brought to bear relatively early after top Bush administration officials, notably Vice President Dick Cheney, began warning at the start of the year that there was a risk of recession.

Policymakers take a bow

"Policymakers deserve significant credit for what they did to prepare the economy early for getting through this downturn," said economist Mark Zandi of Economy.com in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The element no policymaker could foresee was the severe blow to confidence from Sept. 11 attacks that smashed the World Trade Center in New York into oblivion and damaged the Pentagon, stopping commerce for days.

Analysts said the success or failure of efforts by the Bush administration and Congress to agree on a new stimulus package to counter the attacks' slowing effect and help end recession remains one of the great unknowns for the economy's prospects. *Reuters*

US price increases damped by recession

WASHINGTON—Recession's grip kept US consumer price inflation in check during November while production by US factories kept sliding for most goods except new cars, according to data released on Friday.

Despite their overall grim tone, the reports that rolled out on Friday contained hints of potential recovery ahead, leading some analysts to predict that aggressive interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve likely were near or at an end.

But the latest government and Fed data showed that, apart from automaking where producers offered robust financing incentives, there remained a considerable slack in the economy that should be taken up en route to renewed expansion.

The Labor Department said falling food and energy costs kept its consumer price index gauge of inflation flat last month after a 0.3-percent decline in October. Imported energy is cheaper primarily because the global economic slowdown has reduced demand.

However, costs for services like medical care and shelter as well as for 2002-model cars and tobacco all climbed, helping drive the so-called core rate of inflation, which excludes food and energy, up 0.4 percent.

That was twice the 0.2-percent rise posted in October and was the sharpest gain for any month since a matching 0.4-percent rise in January 1996.

Separately, the Fed said industrial production dropped for a fourth straight month in November, down 0.3 percent after a 0.9-percent October plunge. Businesses ran at their slowest rate in 18-1/2 years, using only 74.7 percent of maximum operating capacity. The Fed said that was the lowest operating rate for industry since May 1983.

The automotive sector proved a bright spot, however, because auto production was ramped up to match sales that have been driven by zero-interest loans from carmakers.

The Fed said vehicle assemblies rose to an 11.81-million annual rate from 10.70 million in October, the strongest clip at which automakers churned out new vehicles since July.

The broad US economy slid into recession in March but the manufacturing sector tumbled into contraction nearly a year earlier, shedding hundreds of thousands of jobs over the past 14 months.

On Friday, the National Manufacturers Association said it drew little comfort from the fact that November's output decline was smaller than in each of the two prior months and appealed for Congress and the White House to agree on fresh fiscal stimulus measures. Partisan bickering has hampered progress on a package.

"This downturn is beginning to rival the dramatic downturn of 1982, when manufacturing output dropped 10 percent over a period of 17 months," said NAM economist David Huether.

Tame inflation offered all the more reason for lawmakers to come to some agreement with the White House on new tax and spending measures to speed recovery, he said.

"It is lack of spending and investment that is the problem, not inflation," Huether said.

A third report, from the Commerce Department, showed businesses making solid progress at the start of the fourth quarter in paring down overstocked inventories, a necessary condition before industrial output can reaccelerate. *Reuters*

McDonalds says beef scare in Japan gnaws at sales

OAK BROOK, Illinois—Mad cow fears in Japan are hurting hamburger consumption in Asia just as European sales begin to recover, US fast-food chain McDonald's Corp. said Friday.

Asia-Pacific sales were being hurt by weak economies in several markets, it said in a financial statement.

"In addition, concerns about the safety of the beef supply in Japan are significantly reducing fourth-quarter sales," McDonald's chair and chief executive Jack Greenberg said.

"To offset these concerns, we are actively communicating our strong beef safety and quality messages, underscoring the fact that McDonald's Japan does not use Japanese beef."

Asia-Pacific sales fell 4 percent after accounting for inflation in October and November but were up 4 percent for the first 11 months of 2001, Greenberg said in the statement.

"Our European business is recovering nicely from the impact of consumer concerns about the safety of the continent's beef supply, posting positive comparable sales for the first two months of the fourth quarter," he added.

European sales grew 8 percent in October and November and were up 4 percent in the first 11 months of the year, the McDonald's chief executive said.

In the United States, sales grew 2 percent in October and November and in the first 11 months, he added.

"We believe our restructuring, ongoing change initiatives and renewed focus on quality, service, cleanliness and value will help drive improved results going forward," Greenberg said.

McDonald's said it expected fourth quarter 2001 earnings per share of 34 cents.

But the figure excluded a $200-million charge for restructuring costs.

It also excluded a $35-$45 million charge over the sale of Aroma Café in Britain and "irrecoverable costs" from a fraud committed in the running of a McDonald's promotion based on the popular game Monopoly.

When the one-off charges are included, fourth-quarter earnings per share are expected to be 21-22 cents, McDonald's said. *AFP*

China trade seen in 2 years

BANGKOK—Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said on Saturday that he wanted a planned free trade area for China and Southeast Asia to be implemented within two years.

Last month, China and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed to set up a free trade area within 10 years.

But Thaksin said this timeframe was too long.

"I will try to make it possible in two years, so we start the study for the zone and we try to expedite everything," Thaksin told reporters by satellite link-up from the United States.

"The ambition is for 10 years, too long for me. By that time I am too old," he said. *Reuters*

IT firm shuts down on Feb. 28

PALO ALTO, California—ExciteAtHome Corp., the once high-flying Internet service provider, on Friday cut about 400 employees, and said it would cease all operations after Feb. 28 of next year.

Although the company had not previously announced the timing of its shutdown, it had been widely expected to cease all operations after AT&T Corp. earlier this month backed out of a deal to purchase its high-speed Internet service assets.

The closure of all the company's operations in February will be the final move in a long downward spiral that landed the company in bankruptcy in September.

ExciteAtHome was formed by the 1999 merger of the Internet content site Excite.com and the high-speed Internet service provider AtHome Corp.—two of the earliest dotcom companies.

Although both services attracted large audiences, they became bogged down with debt and also suffered from a lack of focus and from the crash in the online advertising market. *Reuters*

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Insurance Age	Annual Premium in Pesos	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in Pesos	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in Pesos	Self Support Year*
18	6,100	15	8,900	15	11,700	15
20	6,335	15	9,253	15	12,170	15
25	6,925	14	10,138	14	13,350	14
30	7,935	14	11,653	13	15,370	13
35	8,955	13	13,183	13	17,410	13
40	11,090	14	16,385	13	21,680	13
45	13,305	14	19,708	14	26,110	14
50	17,400	16	25,850	16	34,300	16
55	21,955	16	32,683	16	43,410	16

Note Package includes Waiver of Premium (Female Rates) and Accident & Health (Twice Face Amount) riders

LIFE SHIELD DOLLAR 9/11

Lifetime Coverage	$10,000		$15,000		$25,000	
Insurance Age	Annual Premium in US Dollars	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in US Dollars	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in US Dollars	Self Support Year*
18	122.30	15	173.45	14	275.75	13
20	128.80	15	183.20	14	292.00	13
25	144.70	14	207.05	13	331.75	13
30	176.60	13	254.90	13	411.50	12
35	215.70	13	313.55	13	509.25	13
40	271.60	13	397.40	12	649.00	12
45	338.40	13	497.60	12	816.00	12
50	425.10	12	627.65	12	1,032.75	12
55	532.20	13	788.30	13	1,300.50	13

Note: Package includes the Waiver of Premium (Female Rates) rider.

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500,000	1,134.25	1,416.25	2,268.00	2,832.00
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Place of Birth
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Age
Height
Civil Status ○ Single ○ Married ○ Widow ○ Separated
Weight
Residence Address
Telephone No.
Business Address
Bus. Tel. No.
Specific Occupation and Duties
Annual Income
Relationship of Proposed Insured to Owner Payor *(if applicable)*
PRODUCT NAME ○ Life Shield 9/11 ○ Life Shield Dollar 9/11 ○ Life Protect 9/11
AMOUNT OF COVERAGE
RIDER *(if applicable)*
Beneficiary's Name
Age

OWNER / PAYOR

Surname
Given Name
Middle Name
Aliases
Date of Birth
Place of Birth
Sex ○ Male ○ Female
Age
Height
Civil Status ○ Single ○ Married ○ Widow ○ Separated
Weight
Residence Address
Telephone No.
Business Address
Bus. Tel. No.
Specific Occupation and Duties
Annual Income
MODE OF PAYMENT ○ Annual ○ Semi-annual ○ Quarterly ○ MSA/BPS ○ SMPDC
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Relationship to P.I.
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C. During the past 5 years, has the PI or O/P consulted any physician for medical treatment, or been confined in a hospital, clinic or similar institutions?	☐Yes ☐No	☐Yes ☐No
D. Does the PI or O/P engage in motorcycle / motorboat / auto racing, sky diving, scuba diving or other hazardous avocations?	☐Yes ☐No	☐Yes ☐No

For each "YES" answer to any of the questions above, please give full details in the space below. For questions A.B, & C, include physician's name and address, hospital, date and nature of consultation, sickness or impairment. Use an addendum form (FormGF7C) for additional answers and/or beneficiaries. Please don't forget to sign these additional forms.

PROPOSED INSURED
OWNER / PAYOR

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I understand that all statements and answers contained herein and in any addendum annexed to this application, as well as those made to the Medical Examiner in Part II (if applicable) hereof are full, complete and true to the best of my knowledge and that any policy issued under this application **will not be in force until I have made the first premium payment during my lifetime and good health.** I also understand that Article 1250 of the Civil Code of the Philippines (R.A. 386) shall not apply to any payments made or to be made by either party to any policy issued under this application.

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Proposed Insured's Signature ____
Owner's Signature ____
Signed at ____
Date Signed ____
Agent's Name & Signature ____
Agent's Code ____
Agent's Contact No. ____
APPLICATION NO. ____
DEPOSIT PAID ____ CR No. ____

Form No. GF - 150 - A

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(This form should be completed for each case)

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Signature of Proposed Insured
Signature of Owner
Signature of Legal Guardian
Signature of Witness

Argentina pays part of debt, avoids default

BUENOS AIRES—Argentina apparently averted economic disaster Friday by paying part of the $1.1 billion required to avoid defaulting on its massive public debt, but it still faced an uphill battle toward recovery.

Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo said the payment of $720 million was made half in cash and half in new bonds.

He called the country's economic situation "very complicated" but said officials were "aware of the difficulties" and ready to face them.

"We must not mistake our situation for a catastrophe—Argentina has many problems but we have solutions," Cavallo insisted.

The $1.1 billion in payments due Friday were made up of $900 million in payments on short-term treasury bills, debts owed in Japanese yen and reimbursements owed to international financial institutions.

The last-minute debt payment, even if partial, was seen as vital to the country' efforts to save its battered economy, mired in recession for nearly four years, and pay off $132 billion in public debt.

But Argentina still faced an uphill battle to meet upcoming payment deadlines later this month in a bid to avoid default, with no immediate aid from the International Monetary Fund.

The country's financial situation got worse earlier this month when the fund delayed a crucial disbursement of $1.264 billion until the government could impose promised austerity measures and tax reforms.

Moreover, the government's latest austerity measures prompted widespread protests last week, including a general strike on Thursday.

Cavallo insisted Argentina had devised a schedule for the rest of the month to ensure timely debt payments but warned it would be dependent on incoming tax revenue.

In 2002, "all estimations lean toward further cuts" in the budget, the minister said, adding that he could not rule out possible further cuts in public sector salaries and pensions, slashed by 13 percent since the summer.

The measures are part of a "zero budget deficit" plan demanded by the IMF as part of Argentina's economic restructuring.

Cavallo said Argentina still stood by its policy of one-to-one parity between the dollar and the peso, saying any devaluation of the Argentine currency was not an option as the country "would be in chaos."

"Each time Argentina went through a devaluation, a strong drop in workers' salaries followed," he noted.

In a meeting Thursday, Argentine President Fernando de la Rua and his predecessor, opposition Peronist leader Carlos Menem, rejected a peso devaluation, with Menem saying De la Rua agreed it would be disastrous.

Earlier in the day, outgoing Deputy Economy Minister Daniel Marx, who confirmed his plans to resign, said the government would make its debt payment "at the last minute."

The government essentially delayed the payments by rolling over short-term obligations due to be paid to private pension administration funds, Marx noted.

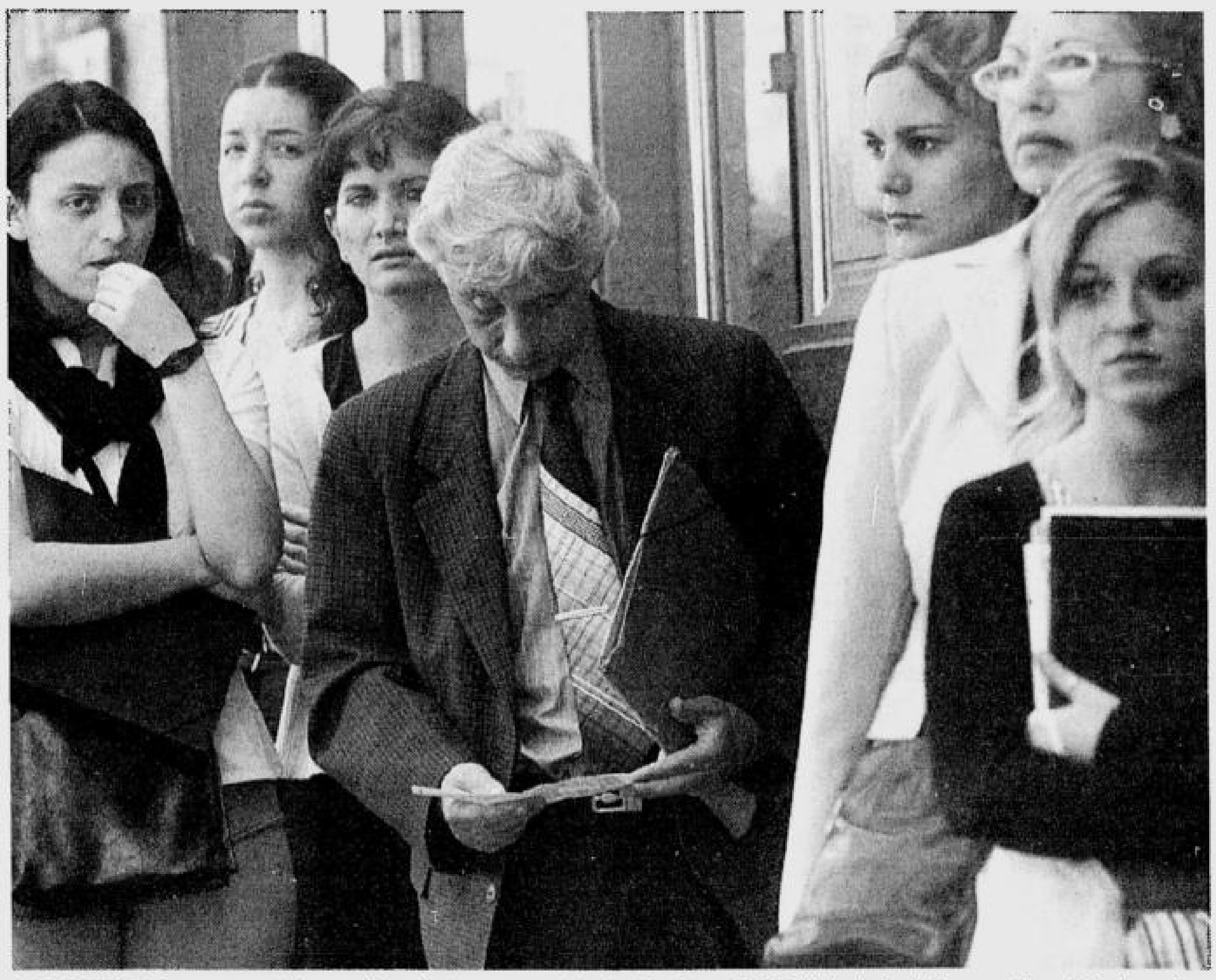
Marx reportedly clashed with his superior, Cavallo, in past weeks, notably over measures aimed at stemming capital flight out of the country.

He told Radio Mitre his departure was for "personal and family reasons."

But Marx said he would assist the government as it continued with its debt swap program aimed at easing payments on the nation's debt, which consumed 46 percent of the country's output.

Marx, who helped engineer the debt-swap program to exchange high-yielding bonds for lower-yielding ones with longer maturities, was replaced by Guillermo Mondino, formerly state secretary for economic policy.

Miguel Kiguel, a banker and strong advocate of dollarization who had been tipped to replace Marx, will instead serve as head of the ministry's Cabinet of advisors. *AFP*



JOB-SEEKERS queue outside an office offering one position in this Dec. 10, 2001 file photo in Buenos Aires. The Argentine government has announced that unemployment rate has risen to 18.3 percent after four years of recession. AP

EU group to work more closely

BRUSSELS—Euro zone finance ministers want to work more closely, particularly in the fields of budget policy and economic reform, the current chair Belgium said on Friday.

The Eurogroup of a dozen euro zone ministers, who met during an EU summit in Brussels, said they had already made strides in the past year, and that closer cooperation had permitted a fast response to the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

But at a time when slowing growth is causing budget slippage around Europe—particularly in Germany, whose deficit is getting close to danger levels—ministers are not resting on their laurels.

The statement said more headway had to be made on monitoring budget policies, promoting structural reform, and on preparing better for their regular meetings, which are typically held on the eve of the wider European Union finance ministers' meetings.

"There is undoubtedly a consensus that the Eurogroup must continue to improve its functioning in order to enable monetary union . . . to function harmoniously."

"It is in fact necessary to go beyond the 'club' which it is today," it also said.

Despite such ambitions, the Belgian statement was at pains to stress their meetings would not detract from the power and importance of the wider EU ministerial meetings.

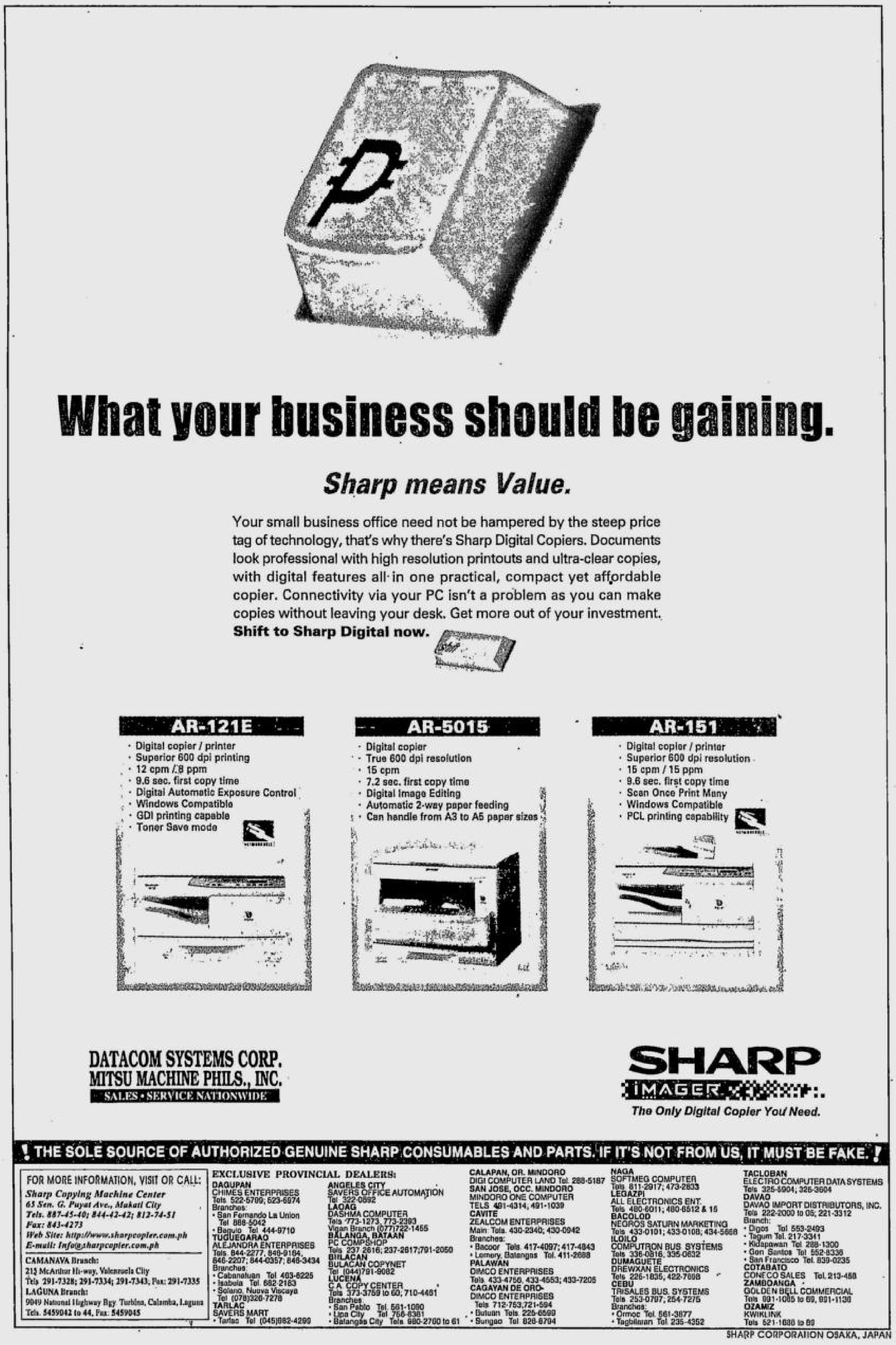
"The Eurogroup is . . . an informal structure existing within an institutional framework which has been gradually put in place since the Treaty of Maastricht," the statement said.

"In particular, the Eurogroup does not call in question the powers conferred on the Ecofin council by the treaties.

Countries that are not members of the euro zone, such as Britain, have already expressed their dismay in the past about being shut out of euro zone discussions and are expected to object to any formalization of Eurogroup meetings.

What are the lessons?

A review of the past year, during which Belgium's Didier Reynders chaired euro zone ministers' meetings, highlighted some lessons euro zone finance ministers have learned. *Reuters*



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Korea's Daewoo Motor to resume operations

SEOUL, South Korea—Daewoo Motor Co. will resume operations next week as subcontractors decided to restart parts supplies on Monday after a five-day boycott of the troubled carmaker, industry officials said Saturday.

Daewoo Motor's three plants have been idle since its subcontractors halted parts deliveries Tuesday to protest the company's delays in paying 1.5 trillion won ($1.2 billion) in overdue bills.

During a meeting Saturday, parts suppliers decided to end their boycott on Monday, said Lee Sang ki, an official at the association of 275 parts suppliers for Daewoo Motor.

The decision came after Daewoo's main creditor, Korea Development Bank, promised to give 122.3 billion won ($95 million) in loans for subcontractors in serious financial strains caused by Daewoo Motor's collapse last year, officials said.

Daewoo's latest trouble has clouded the prospect of a takeover deal with General Motors Corp. of the United States.

After months of talks, GM signed a non-binding preliminary agreement in September to acquire control of Daewoo. The auto giant had said it planned to sign a binding agreement before year's end after a final due diligence.

But unconfirmed local news reports said the negotiations were unlikely to be wrapped up by year's end.

Daewoo Motor, a flagship of the giant Daewoo group which collapsed in the aftermath of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, went bankrupt in November last year and has since been under court receivership.

Its total debt is estimated at over $17 billion.

Daewoo Motor has been a major headache for the South Korean government which has been struggling to reform the country's debt-ridden businesses and financial industry.

Despite heavy debts, Daewoo can help GM break into South Korea's closed market, and could bolster attempts to advance into China, a key target for future growth of American auto giants. *AP*

Hyundai Motor union to ease strike action

SEOUL—The labor union of South Korea's largest automaker, Hyundai Motor Co., will ease its strike action on Monday as negotiations with the management make progress, the union said Saturday.

Hyundai Motor in the southern city of Ulsan remained idle Saturday after thousands of workers launched a two-day strike Friday, demanding a 30-percent share in the company's record profits.

"On Monday, we will get back to work but we will lay down tools for two hours," a labor union spokesman said.

A day of missed work means the lost production of some 5,000 cars for the company's Ulsan plant.

The union and management have ironed out differences in some key points of contention, although they remain at odds over how to share the profits and other terms.

The management has accepted the workers' demand to reinstate union activists who were fired for leading strikes.

The company will also secure an agreement from the union before making any redundancies.

The workers are also demanding management delivery on an agreement to give the union a 30-percent share in net profits, with another 30 percent going to shareholders and 40 percent to finance investments.

The company expects to reap an all-time record net profit worth 1.2 trillion won ($940 million) this year.

This meant the union was entitled to a special bonus of more than five months' salary and 12.9 percent wage hikes, the spokesperson said. But management offered three months' salary for the bonus and single-digit wage hikes. *AFP*

127.60
15:48
TOKYO

TOKYO money dealers work under an electrical board indicating a trading rate of 127.60 yen against the dollar during the afternoon session on the Tokyo Foreign Exchange Market on Friday. The US currency surged to a three-year high against the yen, buying 127.52 yen at 3p.m.

Japan's tax reform process under fire

TOKYO—Japan's ruling party came under fire Saturday for protecting old ways and special interests in its long-awaited review of the tax system, contrary to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's promise of reform.

Koizumi's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) proposed late Friday several changes to the tax system, a move supposed to help spur a reform drive resisted by stalwarts within the conservative party.

But newspaper editorials on Saturday unanimously slammed the proposal for wooing as many branches of government, businesses and lobbies as possible but lacking the drive to pull Japan out of recession.

The LDP, now supported by two smaller parties in parliament, has long dominated the process of coordinating requests for tax changes from different industries and branches of government at the end of the year.

"We are fed up with the slapstick," the influential newspaper Asahi Shimbun commented.

The leading economic daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun agreed. "We should put paid to the lead of the LDP tax council in tax reform."

Among other things, the LDP-dominated ruling coalition proposed the introduction of a consolidated tax system for corporations and their subsidiaries to be taxed as a group.

The idea, also recommended by a government tax commission, helps companies relegate money losing divisions into subsidiaries without extra tax burdens and boost the chances of their revival.

But the LDP panel, at the same time, proposed a 2-percent surtax for companies who adopt the group tax system for two years on top of the 30-percent group corporate tax.

The accessory duty would make up for a projected revenue shortfall of 800 billion yen ($6.4 billion) resulting from introducing the group tax.

"Such a political measure, just like stepping on the accelerator and the brake at the same time, shows a total lack of idealism," the mass-circulation Yomiuri Shimbun said.

The Nihon Keizai said, "It may secure tax revenue in the short term but threatens to curb recovery in corporate competitiveness."

The ruling bloc has left out a proposed tax increase on inexpensive, increasingly popular low-malt, beer-like beverages, known as "happoshu," amid strong objections not only from the brewery industry but also from the public.

A tax increase on tobacco was spared in tandem.

"The more we see the claptrap, perennial action of accommodating tobacco farmers, the stronger our desire for structural reform in tax policy decisions grows," Asahi said.

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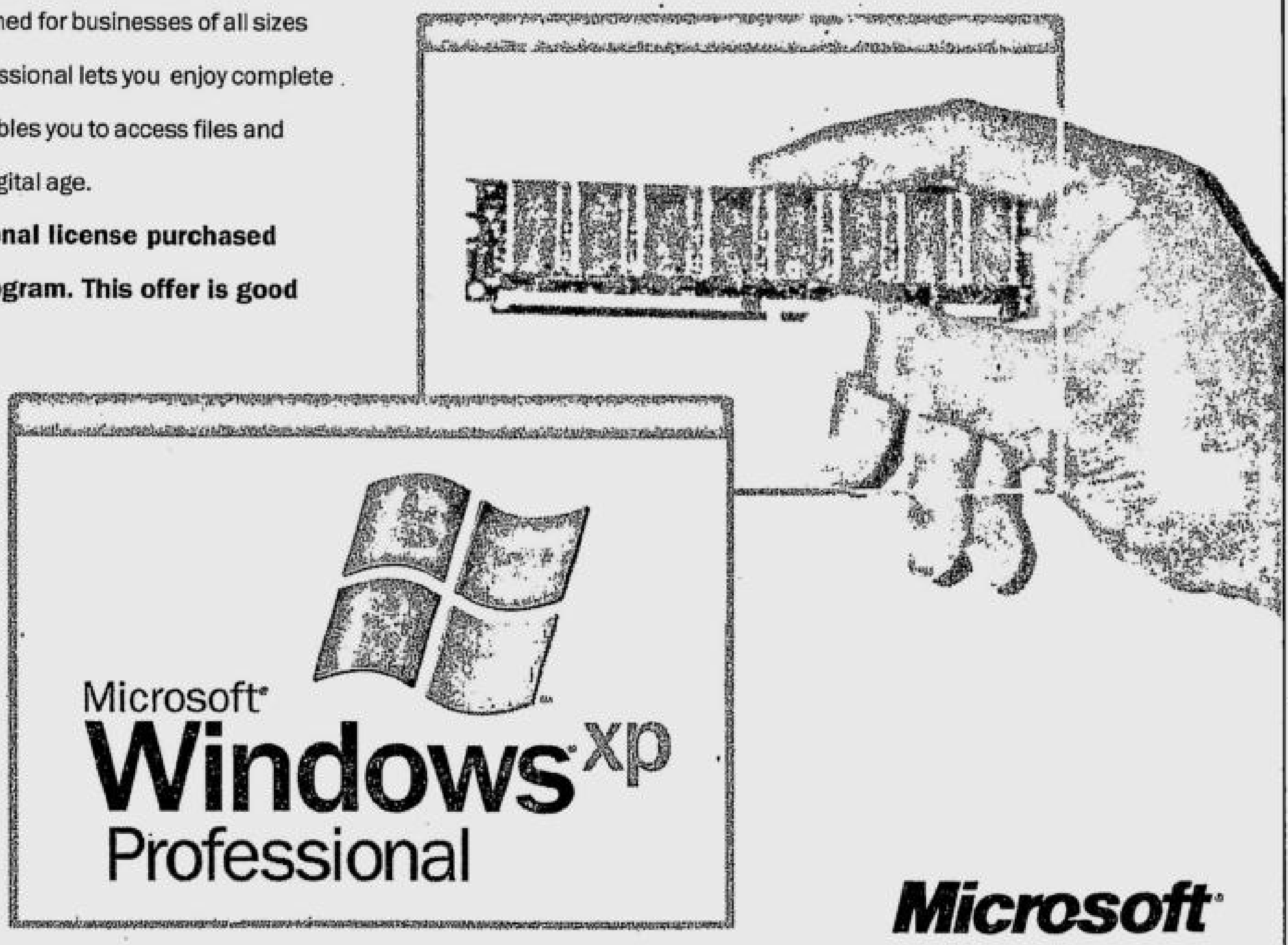

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Notice is given that the estates of the late spouses **SOLEDAD GERONIMO LERMA** and **LUIS L. LERMA** of Morong Rizal who died on August 24, 2001 and October 23, 1999, respectively have been extrajudicially settled by their heirs per Doc. #240, Page #48, Book #CXXXIII, Series of 2001 of Atty. Gregorio E. Ariola, Jr.
(P.D.I.-- December- 17, 24, and 31 2001.)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the deceased REMEDIOS V. TIMOG covered by PESO SAVINGS DEPOSIT ACCOUNT (ESP Acct.# 2361-0432-89 LAND BANK OF THE PHIL. Lagro, Quezon City) has been the subject of EXTRA -JUDICIAL PARTITION as per Doc.# 2161; Page# 432; Bk# III , Series of 2001 executed before Notary Public Atty. Jaime A. Mario, Jr. of Makati City.
(PDI Dec. 10, 17 & 24, 2001)

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OFFICE OF THE PREQUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

December 4, 2001

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP), through the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), has received an ODA Loan from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) in the amount of NINE HUNDRED FIFTY ONE MILLION JAPANESE YEN (Y951 million) toward the cost of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Phase V (RWSSP V), Loan Agreement No. PH-P201, dated December 28, 1999, and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of the loan to payments under the contracts for which this Invitation for Prequalification is issued. Disbursement of the ODA Loan by JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans". No party, other than the GOP, shall derive any right from the Loan Agreement or have any claim to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only a part of the project cost. As to the remaining portion, the GOP and the concerned Provincial Local Government Units (LGUs) will take appropriate measures for finance.
2. JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as the GOP and the Provincial LGUs, under contracts funded with FBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC;
    (a) will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt and fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
    (b) will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans if at any times determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.
3. The DILG, on behalf of the Provincial LGUs of the Provinces of Ilocos Sur, Nueva Vizcaya, Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro; announces the intention of the Provincial LGUs, hereinafter the individual "Employer", to prequalify contractors for the construction of the following four (4) separate contract/provincial packages under the RWSSP V;

ILOCOS SUR
- 62 units deep well
- 10 units shallow well
- 11 units school toilet
- 1 unit public toilet

NUEVA VIZCAYA
- 23 units deep well
- 19 units shallow well
- 5 units school toilet

OCCIDENTAL MINDORO
- 25 units deep well
- 51 units shallow well
- 2 units school toilet
- 1 unit public toilet

ORIENTAL MINDORO
- 29 units deep well
- 11 units shallow well
- 1 units school toilet
- 1 unit public toilet

4. It is expected that the Provincial LGUs, each individual Employer, will issue Invitations to Bid on March 2002 for their respective provincial package to be bid consisting of Level I water supply and sanitation facilities. The estimated date of contract award is May 2002.
5. Prequalification is open to firms and voluntarily formed joint ventures from all countries and areas. An Applicant, and if prequalified, a bidder (including all members of a joint venture) shall not be one of the following:
    (a) A firm or an organization which has been engaged by the DILG/Employer to provide consulting/NGO services for the preparation related to procurement for or implementation of this project;
    (b) Any association/affiliation (inclusive of parent firm) of a firm or an organization mentioned in subparagraph (a) above; or
    (c) A firm or organization who lend, or temporarily second their personnel to firms or organizations which are engaged in consulting/NGO services for the preparation related to procurement for or implementation of the project, if the personnel would be involved in any capacity on the same project.
6. Applicants will be evaluated in two (2) stages. Stage 1 or "Preliminary Screening" is to assess the document formality required in the Prequalification Documents with pass or fail criteria. Stage 2 is the "Detailed Evaluation" to examine whether the submitted documents comply with the "Minimum Requirement" for each item of: a) Financial Position, b) Experience, c) Personal Capabilities, and d) Equipment Capabilities with pass or fail criteria.
7. A minimum requirement for qualification is to have successfully carried out similar projects at least for within the past five (5) years. The minimum License Category required per contract/provincial package for each of the Provinces of Ilocos Sur, Nueva Vizcaya, Occidental Mindoro, and Oriental Mindoro is Medium B; with Classification in General Engineering and coverage in Water Supply, and in General Building.
8. Applicants who wish to be prequalified may obtain the Prequalification Documents from December 18, 2001 - February 4, 2002 after submission of a written request to:

The Honorable Provincial Governor
Province of
Provincial Capitol

Attention: The Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

of the Province of Ilocos Sur in Vigan City, Province of Nueva Vizcaya in Bayombong, Province of Occidental Mindoro in Mamburao, Province of Oriental Mindoro in Calapan City.

9. The request must clearly state "Request for Prequalification Documents for the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Phase V, (name of Province). The documents are available upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) after which said documwents will be issued to the Applicant.
10. Interested firm or voluntarily formed joint venture may apply for prequalification in any one or in more than two of the provinces/provincial packages. Information required in the Application for Prequalification or Eligibility will be treated as exclusive to the province or contract/provincial package where the application is filed.
11. Submission of Applications for Prequalification must be received in sealed envelopes, either delivered by hands or by registered mail or by courier to:

The Honorable Governor
Province of
Province Capitol

Attention: The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

of the Province of Ilocos Sur in Vigan City, Province of Nueva Vizcaya in Bayombong, Province of Occidental Mindoro in Mamburao, Province of Oriental Mindoro in Calapan City not later than 5:00 pm on February 4, 2002 and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Phase V, (name of Province).

12. The Employer shall under no circumstances be held responsible for late delivery or loss of the documents so mailed or sent through courier.
13. The Employer reserves the right to:
    (a) amend the scope and value of any contract to be bid, in which event the contract will only be bid among those prequalified bidders who meet the requirements of the contract as amended;
    (b) reject or accept any application;
    (c) cancel the prequalification process and reject all applications; and
    (d) waive any formality in the prequalification (PQ) process to ensure that the objectives of the PQ process are met.

    The Employer shall neither be liable for any such actions nor be under any obligation to inform the Applicants of the grounds for them.
14. Applicants will be advised in due course, of the results of their Applications. Only firms and joint ventures prequalified under this procedure will be invited to bid. A prequalified firm or a member of a prequalified joint venture may participate in all the four (4) biddings, provided they are prequalified or have passed the Prequalification for that contract bidding.

(Sgd.) ATTY. AGRIPINO G. MORGA
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--Dec. 8 & 17, 2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Ismael B. Pan who died on March 13, 2000, consisting of personal property was extrajudicially settled & distributed among his heirs by means of an Extrajudicial Settlement of Estate w/Waiver of Share executed on October 23, 2000 & ratified before Atty. Buenaventura R. Puentebella, Notary Public for and in Caloocan City, as per Doc. #316, Page #65, Book #XXIV, Series of 2000 of his Notarial Register.
(PDI-Dec. 14, 21 & 28, 2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that NO KA OI PHILIPPINES INTERNATIONAL, INC. Stock Certificate Nos. 005 & 006 issued in the name of MARCELINO M. LAZARO, JR. has been reported lost per Affidavit of Loss dated 25 October, 2001. After the expiration of one year from the last publication date of this notice, if no contest has been presented to NO KA OI PHILIPPINES INTERNATIONAL, INC. the right to make such contest shall be barred and the corporation shall cancel in its books certificate of stock nos. 005 & 006 which has been reported lost and issue in lieu thereof, new certificates of stock.
PDI-Dec.3, 10 & 17, 2001

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The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) invites sealed written bids, re: a) 1 set Sleep Machine; b) 1 set Neurocom Balance Master System; c) 1 unit Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump; d) 1 unit Pulse Oximeter & e) 1 unit Rigid Bronchoscope.

Only duly accredited bidders/suppliers will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

List of requirements to be submitted:

1. Letter of intent/co. profile
2. SEC registration
3. Bus. License
4. List of clients
5. Financial Statement (last 2 yrs.)
6. ITR (last 2 yrs.)
7. Location Map of Office
8. Brochures of machines

****for add'l requirement, pls inquire at purchasing div. @922-0574 & look for Noemi****

All interested bidders/suppliers must submit their accreditation documents on or before Jan. 8, 2002 at Purchasing Division.

The PHC reserves the right to disqualify any prospective bidder/s if found that they have submitted falsified documents and/or information and the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

(Sgd.) **ROMEO J. SANTOS, M.D.**
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--Dec. 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 & 24, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
Branch 92
City of Calamba

Remigio A. Ching
Petitioner,

- versus - SEC CASE NO. 26-2001-C

ELMER A. CHING, ET. AL.
Respondents.
x--------------------------x

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

Now, therefore, you, LEONCIO A. CHING, now permanently and presently residing 9447 Lemona Avenue, North Hills, California 91343, USA is hereby enjoined to file with the Office of the Clerk of Court, Regional Trial Court, City of Calamba, your answer to the complaint within ninety (90) days from the date of the last publication thereof, furnishing a copy thereof to the complainant, Remigio A. Ching. If you fail to file your answer to the complaint within the period herein stated complainant shall demand from the court the relief prayed for in the complaint.

Let this service of summons by publication be published at the expense of the plaintiff in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines, once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks. Let also copy of the summons together with a copy of the complaint and the order of October 4, 2001, be deposited, postage prepaid and sent by registered mail to the defendant's last known address at the expense of the plaintiff.

WITNESS the HON. ANTONIO S. POZAS, Presiding Judge, of this Court, this 4th day of October 2001.

(Sgd.) TEOFILA C. DE VERA
Officer-in-charge

(PDI – Dec. 3, 10 & 17, 2001)

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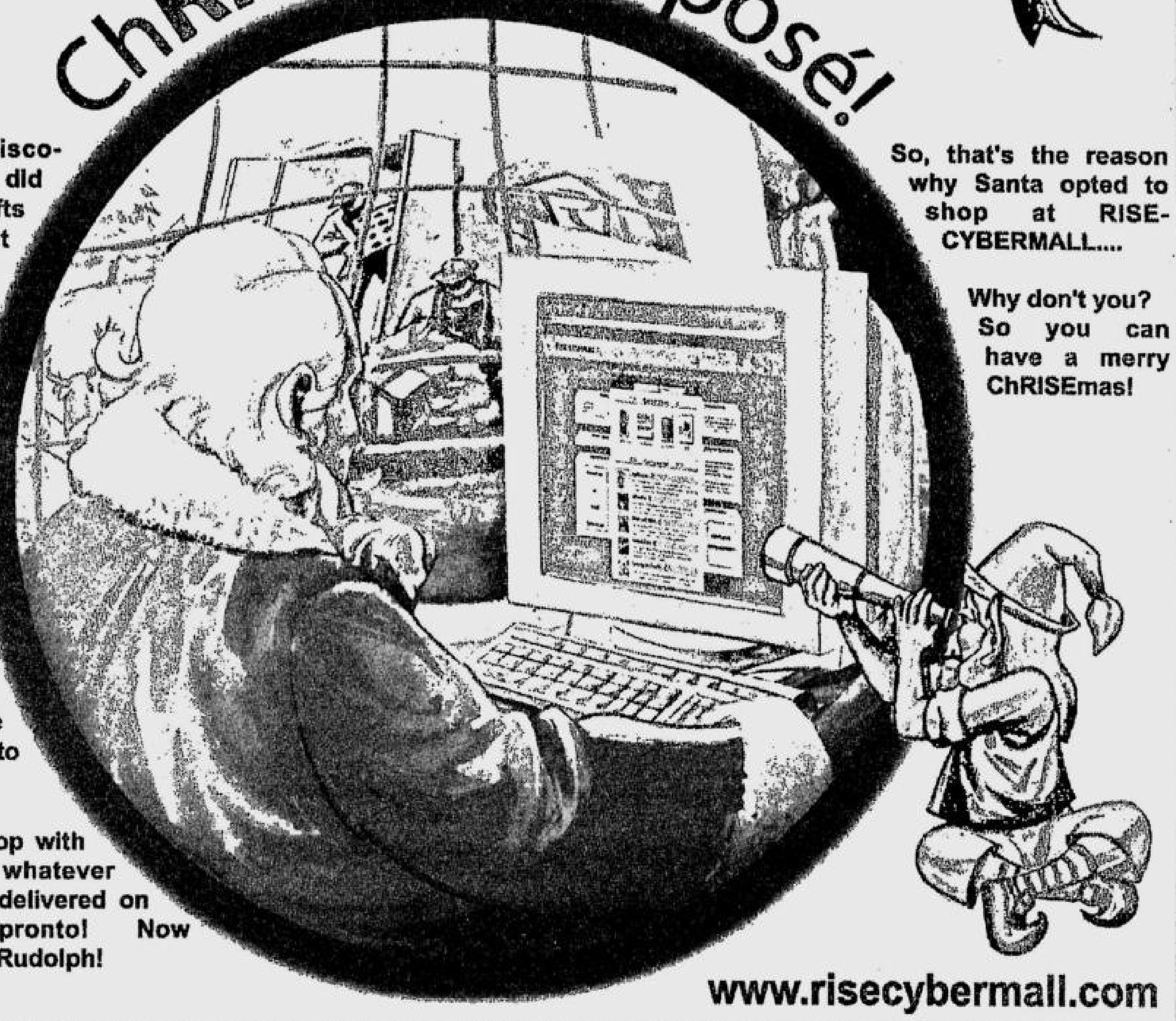

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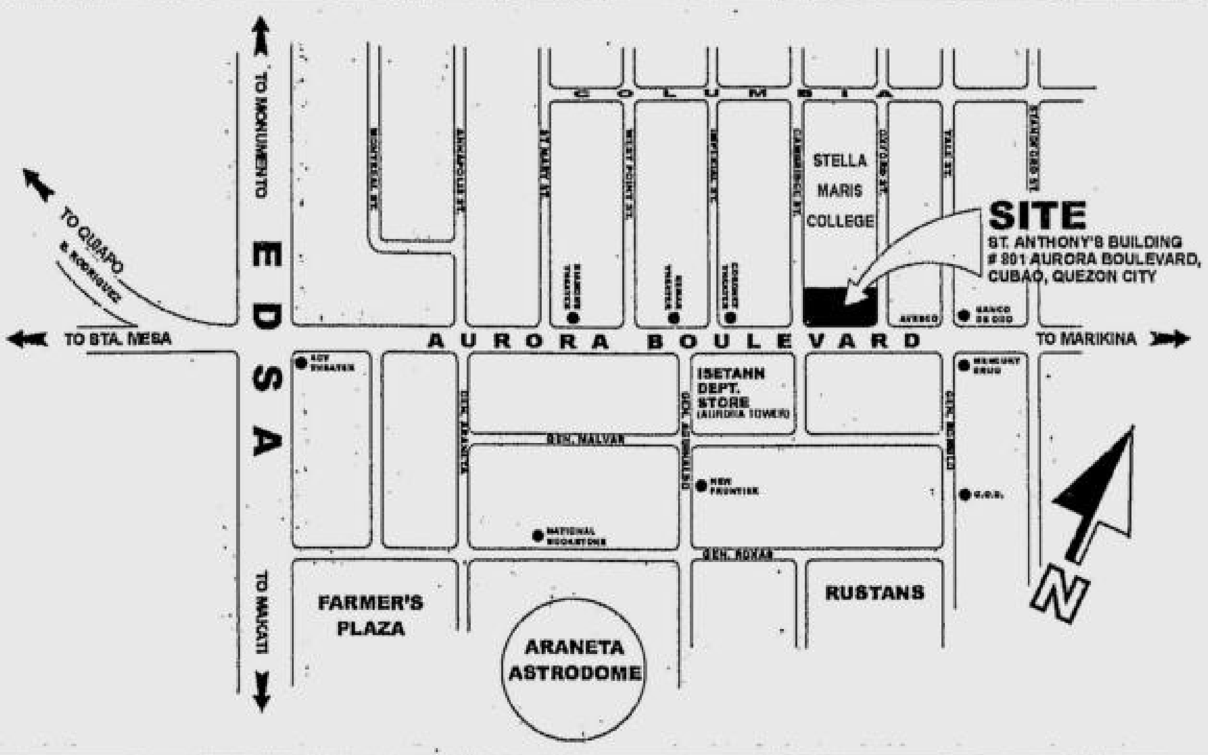

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Died in the Grace of our Lord on
December 12, 2001 at the age of 45.

Her beloved father **Commodore Ramon P. Madrid, AFP Retired**; mother **Professor Esther Samonte Madrid** (†); sisters **Daphne, Moira & Roger Spahr**; niece **Giselle M. Spahr**; brothers **Raymond** (†) and **Dr. Joel Madrid**, aunts, uncles and cousins request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at Parish of the Hearts of Mary & Jesus West Triangle Homes, Quezon City.

Cremation will be announced later.

Gen. Mauro E. Miranda Sr. PA (Ret.)

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 15, 2001 at the age of 82.

His bereaved wife **Pura**, children **Anthony** (†) and **Evelyn Miranda**, **Romualdo** and **Virginia Miranda**, **Evelyn** and **Manuel Arceo**, **Cynthia** and **Wilfredo Coronado**, **Mauro Jr.** and **Carmelita Miranda**, **Oscar** and **Eric**, grandchildren and great grandchildren request all relatives and friends to pray for his eternal peace and happiness with our Lord.

His remains lie in state at the Immaculate Conception Church, Sta. Cruz, Laguna. Interment will be on Wednesday, December 19, 2001 at the Garden of Peace Memorial Park after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

LUZ SANCHEZ-CASTAÑEDA

of 57 Tindalo St., Proj. 3, Quezon City

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 14, 2001 at the age of 88.

Her bereaved nephews and nieces **Erik** and **Lynn**, **Bing** and **Laylay**, **Rorie** and **Pete**, **Ony** and daughter **Hannah**; **Ramon** and **Dotee**, **Mario**; grandnieces and grandnephews, close companions **Dolores, Martin, Jojo** and **Domar** and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Chapel 10, 3rd floor of La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment is tentatively set on December 19, 2001 at the Himlayang Pilipino after Mass at the La Funeraria Paz, Quezon City.

"We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death.
He will raise us to life with Jesus.
He will present us, along with you, to God."

SANTIAGO GALLO ROXAS, JR.

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 14, 2001 at the age of 74.

His bereaved wife **JOSIE**; children **NANI**, **TESSA** and **NORMAN**, **GINNY** and **RENE**, **JOJI** and **TRES**, **GERRY** and **GEMMA**; grandchildren, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends request for prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be held at Krus sa Wawa, Bocaue Bulacan on Wednesday, December 19, 2001 after the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass.

EVANZUEDA REVELAR LUNA, O.D.

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on December 16, 2001 at the age of 54.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington East The Garden Chapels, C. Raymundo St., cor. Mercedes Ave., San Miguel Pasig City.

Interment will be announced later.

> **"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."**
>
> *Matthew 10:39*

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2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from **December 18 to 20, 2001** and **January 4 to 10, 2002**, Mondays thru Fridays, during office hours, where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   After **January 10, 2002**, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC office from Monday to Friday, **8:00 a.m.** to **5:00 p.m.**, or by mail addressed to—

   The Manager
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   2228 Chino Roces Avenue, 1231 Makati City
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature.

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
3. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Narvacan (Ilocos Sur) Inc. is on **April 8, 2003**. After **April 8, 2003**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI – Dec. 15 & 17, 2001)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF TINAMBAC (Camarines Sur), INC. (RBTI)

1. Starting **December 18, 2001**, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed **Rural Bank of Tinambac (Camarines Sur), Inc.**
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   After **December 20, 2001**, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Office from Monday to Friday, **8:00 a.m.** to **5:00 p.m.**, or by mail addressed to —

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   2228 Chino Roces Avenue, 1231 Makati City
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
3. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Tinambac (Camarines Sur), Inc. is on **May 6, 2003**. After **May 6, 2003**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

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First euro coins hit jackpot in France, Ireland, Netherlands

PARIS—The public appearance of euro coins sparked a buying spree in Paris Friday, forcing France to turn to Spain for fresh supplies, as the Dutch queued up for free samples and the Irish rushed to banks to get their first look at the single European currency.

The three countries were the first in the 12-nation euro zone to distribute sampler kits of the coins, giving the public an advance look at the single currency.

Austria, Belgium, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain will follow suit Saturday, with Germany, Greece and Portugal completing the rollout Monday.

The new euro coins and banknotes will enter general circulation as cash for the 304 million Europeans in the euro zone on Jan. 1, replacing national currencies within two months.

Coins distributed Friday and over the next two weeks will not become legal tender until New Year's Day.

The euro was in fact introduced on Jan. 1, 1999 but its use since then has been limited to check and credit card transactions.

"As soon as they see the euro, they will be convinced that the changeover will go smoothly, without hitches," said Eugenio Domingo Solans, a Spanish member of the European Central Bank executive board.

Eager customers in Paris began snapping up euro coin kits at midnight.

"In Paris, the first euro kit was sold at one second past midnight to a regular customer at the La Havane café and tobacco shop on the Place de Clichy, which is open all night," said Michel Arnaud, head of the French tobacconist federation.

Seven hours later, the shop had sold 260 kits and the all-night central post office had already sold out, he said.

Queues formed in front of banks and other outlets—notably post offices —that were selling the packets of 40 euro coins, priced at 100 francs (15.25 euros, $13.78).

By evening, 12.5 million, or 25 percent, of the government's 50 million kits had been sold, according to estimates by the post office, banks and tobacconists. *AFP*

China eyes record year, despite drop in growth

BEIJING—Growth in realized foreign direct investment (FDI) into China fell in November, but officials are optimistic that a 15.6-percent growth rate in the first 11 months of the year is enough to set a new annual record, state press said Friday.

China's actual FDI during the 11 months to November rose 15.6 percent from a year earlier to $41.9 billion, the China Daily reported, citing statistics from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Contracted FDI during the 11 months rose 24.3 percent from a year earlier to $60.41 billion, it said.

According to data released last month, FDI to China in the first 10 months of the year was up 18.6 percent over the same period in 2000 to $37.3 billion.

Chinese economists have largely blamed the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States for a fall in the growth of FDI. FDI in China had surged 20.4 percent in the first eight months of the year.

"The total FDI in China was expected to see a two-digit rise for the whole year and surpass the previous record of $45.5 billion in 1998," the paper quoted Wang Zhile, an economist at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, as saying.

This month, Minister of the State Developmental Planning Commission Zeng Peiyan, citing China's entry into the World Trade Organization, predicted that realized FDI to China would pass $47 billion this year and $50 billion in 2002.

During the first 11 months of the year, China approved the launch of 22,915 enterprises with foreign investment, 16.32 percent more than were approved at the same time last year, the China Daily said.

Since China began approving foreign investment projects in the early 1980s, foreign investors have poured some $390 billion into the booming economy, with over 387,000 foreign companies establishing operations here. *AFP*

Bankruptcies continue in Japan

TOKYO—The number of major Japanese corporate bankruptcies rose 10 percent from a year earlier to 1,851 in November, a research firm said Friday, warning of further failures amid a persistent recession.

"Corporate earnings have worsened and personal spending has slumped, pushing the deflationary trend into a spiral amid a credit crunch and a plunge in prices," Teikoku Databank Ltd. said.

The total was the highest for November and the fifth highest for any month since the end of World War II, the firm said in its monthly report. It was the third straight year-on-year increase.

Total liabilities left by the collapsed firms soared 53.9 percent from a year earlier to 1.88 trillion yen ($15 billion) with the inclusion of two companies listed on the major board of the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

The two big casualties were Taisei Fire and Marine Insurance Co. Ltd., which went under with liabilities of 413.1 billion yen, and heavy-duty machinery maker Niigata Engineering Co. Ltd., with 227 billion yen in liabilities.

Teikoku covers bankruptcies with debts of 10 million yen or more.

Of the total, 1,419 or 76.6 percent of the bankruptcies were attributed to the recession, which was confirmed by the government's announcement last week that the economy shrunk for the second straight quarter, dumping the nation into its third recession in a decade.

The ratio of recession-induced bankruptcies stayed above 75 percent for the seventh straight month.

"Bankruptcies are feared to increase rapidly in the period with great demand for funds" from December to March, the final months of the financial year, Teikoku said.

It said the future of "problem sectors" such as retailers and general contractors, due to be scrutinized by financial authorities, would be the "focus of attention." *AFP*

IMF cuts US, German growth forecasts

WASHINGTON—The International Monetary Fund will pare its growth forecasts for the US and German economies in an interim report set for release Tuesday but will ratchet up its Japan targets, according to a copy of the report.

In a copy of the report obtained by Reuters on Friday ahead of the official release, the IMF forecasts US growth for 2001 of one percent, down from the 1.1 percent it predicted last month.

The report leaves the 2002 growth forecast for the US economy unchanged at 0.7 percent.

Meanwhile, industrial production fell across most of the euro zone in October as firms trimmed output and froze investment to deal with a global economic slowdown that threatens to sharply dent the area's growth going into 2002.

Economists said industrial output figures for France, Italy and Finland published on Friday showed the sharp slowdown in Germany, which published output data last week, was now spreading to previously sturdier economies. *Reuters*

GE Capital to buy Security Capital

STAMFORD—GE Capital, a unit of General Electric Co., said on Friday it had entered into a definite agreement to acquire real estate operating firm Security Capital Group Inc.

Stamford, Connecticut-based GE Capital said it would pay Security Capital's Class B stockholders $26 per share in cash or a combination of cash and shares of the common stock of ProLogis, a provider of distribution services and facilities currently held by Security Capital.

Security Capital's Class A stockholders would receive 50 times the consideration paid to its Class B stockholders under the deal, which GE Capital expects to help it gain a foothold in the real estate business.

If payment is made in cash and shares, the aggregate consideration for Class B stockholders would total $2.9 billion in cash or $18.90 per Class B share, and $1.1 billion in ProLogis shares or $7.10 per Class B share, said GE Capital.

The figures are based upon an approximate exchange ratio of 0.324 ProLogis shares per Security Capital Class B share equivalent at the ProLogis closing price on Dec. 13, the companies said in a joint statement.

GE Capital would also assume $1.4 billion in debt and preferred stock and a cash balance of approximately $1.4 billion, which includes proceeds from Security Capital's recently announced sales of Homestead Village Inc. and its interest in CarrAmerica Realty Corp., it added. *Reuters*

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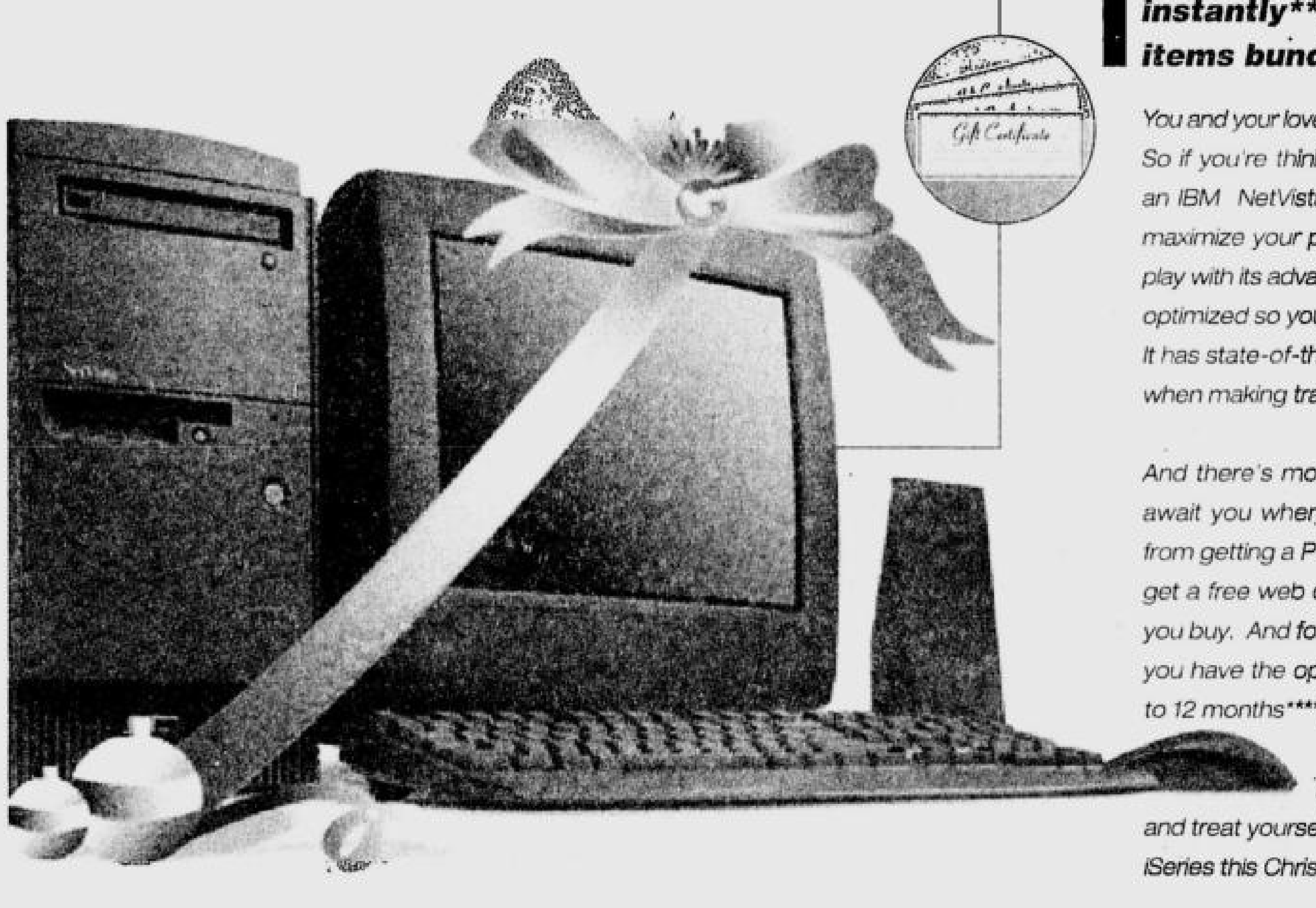

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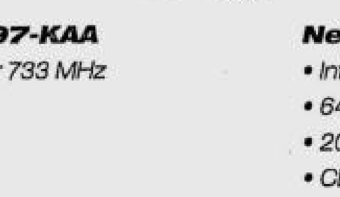

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Banks' bad loan ratio rises to 18.81%

By Clarissá S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio of the country's 44 commercial banks rose to 18.81 percent in October from 17.92 percent in September.

The central bank said in a statement that the NPL levels rose by 3.39 percent or P9.55 billion during the month even as the total loan portfolio contracted by 1.49 percent or P23.49 billion to P1.549 trillion from P1.573 trillion.

The central bank data showed the coverage ratio. (loan-loss reserves to NPLs) dropped to 42.17 percent from 43.49 percent in September, as the loan-loss reserves of P300 million fell short of the P9.55 billion or 3.39 percent rise in NPL.

The ratio of gross restructured loans to the total loan portfolio increased to 7.19 percent from 6.96 percent the previous month. Gross restructured loans grew by P1.97 billion or 1.8 percent to P111.43 billion.

The ratio of gross real and other properties owned and acquired (Ropoa) to gross assets rose slightly to 4.87 percent from 4.73 percent in September. The Ropoa grew by 1.60 percent to P151.06 billion from P148.69 billion.

A senior central bank official said the bad loans portfolio might already carry part of the P7.9 billion in loans of Ramcar Inc., which could have defaulted.

But Ramcar's chief finance officer Jess Montemayor said that all of the battery maker's loans were still current on the strength of promissory notes that would expire next year. He said the company wanted to restructure its loans before these would default.

Ramcar was among the many companies reeling from the aftermath of the Asian crisis and the economic slowdown that ensued.

Many companies and individuals were unable to service even the interest on their loans, thus making them non-performing.

Non-performing loans refer to accounts whose principal or interest is unpaid for 90 days or more after due date. A loan is considered past-due if it is unpaid after a month.

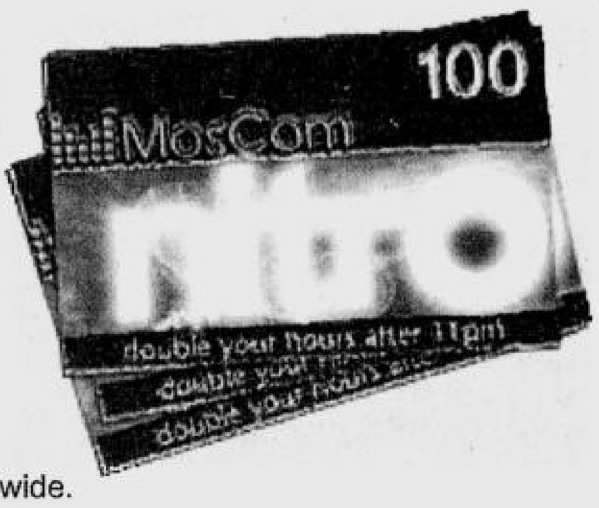
Even if interbank loans were taken out from the total loan portfolio, the ratio of commercial banks' NPLs in October would still have increased to 20.68 percent from 20.09 percent.

In September, an increased lending activity among banks had led to a lower NPL ratio since it pushed up the total loan portfolio.

In October, all the commercial lending groups registered a higher level of bad loans.

Of the P9.55 billion in additional soured loans, the universal banks accounted for P7.37 billion, foreign branches had P170 million, the regular commercial banks had P1.82 billion, and the government banks contributed P193 million.

Meanwhile, the P23.49 billion decline in the loan portfolio was due to a drop of P14.66 billion from the foreign branches, P7.99 billion from government banks, and P1.46 billion from universal banks. The decline had offset a P620-million increase in the credit portfolio of regular commercial banks.



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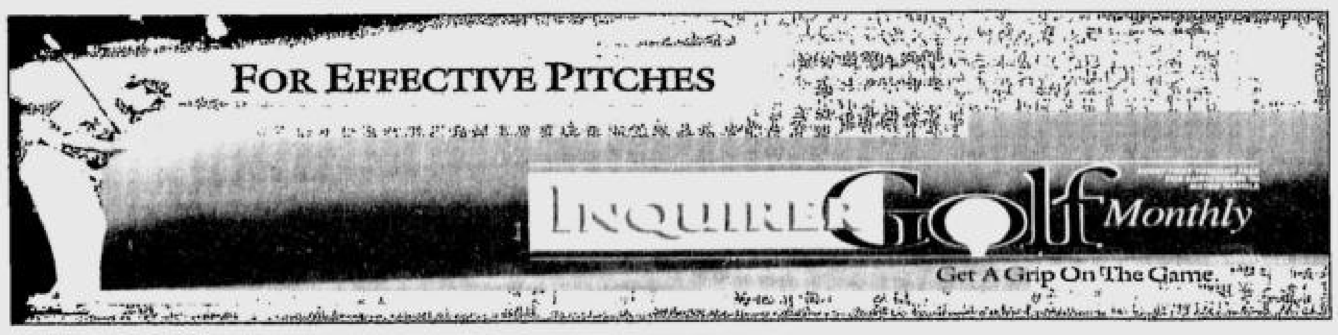

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS*Monday*

MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

VIA TECHNOLOGY

Nine ways to save time and money

(Last of two parts)

IN THE first part, we discussed the potential and common hazards of IT implementation. Looking forward and more importantly, toward reality, we will answer the questions highlighted and build a case for using technology to actually deliver promised benefits.

Identify your needs first and then fit technology to satisfy those. This need is based not on your fashion conscious appetite for buzzwords but on an actual introspection of your cost drivers, business processes and customer-value proposition. Blindly copying what your competitors are doing without an internally justified business case is a certain recipe for disaster. Remember that most of the drivers for your core business have not changed dramatically, and technology at best can only be a tool to thresh out existing inefficiencies within that ideology.

Next, identify core opportunity areas for specific value delivery and only then source for appropriate technology after a thorough cost-benefit analysis. Understand what technology can and can't do by recognizing beforehand its limitations.

Thoroughly evaluate your IT vendors. Don't go by big names or on recommendations of your IT department alone. Research their background and check for implementation track record. Remember, even big vendors can get it wrong. A case in point is Nike who recently blamed i2's customized supply chain management software when its sales were 28 percent below expectation.

Tailor the technology to the specific needs of your company. Select the technology to suit your unique competitive advantage. For example Dell and Wal-Mart have both opted for private electronic marketplace that build around their exclusive supply chains, rather than share restricted information with their competitors in a consortia-run electronic platform.

Understand the Asian peculiarities when selecting established western models. For example, according to Gartner Research, cost-ratio of direct to indirect materials in the US is 60:40, while it is 80:20 for companies in Asia. This might have liquidity implications for e-procurement marketplaces in the region. Hence, remain flexible during design phase to the specifics of your company.

Understand change implications and believe in collaboration. Recognize change dependencies, user acceptability, need for skills transfer and alignment to the unified objective. Collaboration on the entire value chain is extremely important, for example an e-procure-

NINE/ C4

MANILA residents produce 0.5 to 0.7 kilos per day.

Start earning from recycling, clock is ticking on garbage woe

BY DENNIS ARROYO

THE CLOCK is ticking on the garbage problem—total volume should increase by 40 percent within the decade. If the problem is not addressed, more and more trash bags will pile up on street corners. And yet the irony is that people can earn by just sorting their trash.

The World Bank released its findings on the garbage problem in a forum for journalists last Dec. 11, 2001.

The report, the Philippine Environment Monitor 2001, explained the origins of the mess and how to respond to it. Fortunately, there are new laws, but they should be implemented well.

Patchamuthu Illangovan, the Bank's team leader, visited all the dumpsites.

Appalled, he recalls seeing a mother breast feeding her baby amid all the filth and said, "it brought tears to my eyes."

For this first of two parts, I have turned some of the findings into a primer.

- **How much trash do we produce?**

The Philippines produced 10.67 million tons of garbage in 2000, and the figure should hit 14.05 million tons by 2010. That's a 40-percent increase.

Most of the wastes come from Metro Manila, which accounts for 23 percent of the total. In fact the level in the capital has been rising 4.5 percent per year for the past four years. Each Metro Manila resident produces 0.5 to 0.7 kilos per day, which is higher than the 0.3 kilos per person for rural Filipinos.

- **How much trash is collected?**

A 1997 estimate for Metro Manila was that 73 percent of the trash was collected. That means a fourth of the capital's solid waste was not collected. The collected trash amounted to some 3,500 tons per day.

Worse, the San Mateo and Carmona landfills were closed, and this has aggravated the problem.

- **What happens to the trash?**

It is sorted and recycled in three stages. It is first gathered at the households, then picked up by garbage collectors, then disposed at open dumpsites. Scavengers sift through the trash and collect what can be recycled, like bottles, plastic containers and tins.

This sorting also takes place at the garbage truck level. The recyclable stuff are then sold to the plants that process them. For example, waste paper ends up as newsprint.

- **What's wrong with this approach?**

It creates mountains of garbage, as the sorting is done at the end of the chain. The sight mocks human dignity. The scavengers eke out a living, and they have to put up with the nausea, fumes and the disease.

Then rain permeates the decaying matter, contaminating ground water.

- **Is there a better way?**

Emphatically, yes. The mountains of garbage can shrink if people practice segregation.

If you divide your garbage at home into organic (*nabubulok*) and inorganic, you can bypass the open dumpsites. The organic stuff can be composted, while the inorganic can be gathered at the barangay level and sold directly to the processing plants.

They don't have to go to the trash mountains like Payatas.

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START/ C5

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Gas man is an accidental ad man; relies on competitive spirit to run

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

MANAGEMENT STYLES

HE walked up and introduced himself. It took a while to figure out he was the head of a nearly three-decade-old ad agency in the country.

His simple stance made him look like one of the copywriters or creative people of Aspac Advertising, where he is president and owner.

Miguel C. Ramos is an unassuming man who admits the transition from selling gasoline—a very essential albeit noncreative product—to the advertising world was not a very easy one.

When his father, Max, found out he did not have long to live in December 1995, he told Miguel it was time for him to join the firm he set up and ran for 21 years.

Without any hesitation, Miguel said yes and in February 1996, he gave up his wish to entrepreneurial dreams, and entered Aspac as operations director. His father by then was very sick and only stayed long enough to introduce Miguel to the people.

Whatever he learned, he learned along the way. He admits it was very difficult for him to enter advertising as the industry is very competitive.

"But I'm a competitive person," he says and this is what drove him to push the firm to compete in the ad industry. His competitive spirit is enhanced by his love for sports—soccer, Tae Kwon Do, golf.

And he looked upon the way his father ran the agency to guide him.

> In focusing on the creative side, Ramos says, 'We ask what our core business is. And creative ideas sell brands.'

"We had always been exposed to the business. My father was a perfectionist. He would push you to your limits. He was hard to please and had high standards. He was a man of principles and his values remained intact in his business decisions," he states.

Without realizing it, the younger Ramos may have been describing a part of his personality.

After finishing his Business Economics degree in 1989 from the University of the Philippines, he refused to join his father and sought work in another place .

"I wanted to do it on my own and make a name for myself," he recalls of his decision.

His first real job he says was with Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. in 1989 where he was with retail marketing and dealt with different dealers or gas station owners.

He was in this work for five years and was even assigned in Zamboanga.

The work was not glamorous but it taught him a lot about human psychology because he had to deal with all sorts of personalities.

"I had to deal with different characters and it gave me a good feel of the market. And it provided me a chance to learn the disciplines of a multinational," Ramos says.

The learnings include setting clear business objectives.

"We have goal setting and regular reviews of our programs," he adds.

When Ramos stepped in as head of the ad agency, it had no branding and was not landing the who's who of creators of great ads.

At the same time he had to battle with old hats who looked down at a neophyte who knew nothing about advertising.

With the help of a friend and a longtime member of Aspac's management team, Milet Leuterio, Ramos overhauled the agency and created a winning creative team.

"The main change we did was to make the focus on the creatives. We brought in an award-winning creative group," he says.

The move is paying off. After failing to land nominations for best ads, it got a nomination two years ago. The icing came last November, when Aspac bagged the highest award for local advertising at the Araw Awards. The firm got the platinum for its "Phonetics" ad for Nokia.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VILLENA

MIGUEL Ramos: "My entrepreneurial spirit is much challenged and fulfilled by my role in Aspac."

In putting emphasis on the creative side, Ramos says the move was simple. "We ask what our core business is. And creative ideas sell brands."

He works closely with the different groups in Aspac and gets involved in brainstorming sessions. He puts together the different departments in the agency and pushes all to squeeze out their creative juices.

His eldest sister, Martha, is the chief finance officer of the agency and youngest brother Martin is an account director.

To bring out the best in his people he has baptized the agency, The Challenger Agency.

Ramos wants to bring his 55-man team to the next level. Since he says his teams are "gelling already, he wants to achieve a certain growth stage."

He has made a SWOT analysis of Aspac which means he has studied its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to take it where it wants to be.

He says he has a young team, with the average age of the staff at 28.

One of the challenges they are responding to is creating a branding for Aspac—stands for and what it does differently.

Although he was not able to pursue his own entrepreneurial plans, Ramos says "My entrepreneurial spirit is much challenged and fulfilled by my role in Aspac."

In April 2000, they became an affiliate of the Bates Worldwide Network. The foreign group does not own any share in Aspac but they are able to impart learnings, transfer of know-how and provides an access to the network of clients.

Between 1984 and 1994, Aspac was called Aspac and Grey as the foreign firm owned 30 percent of the agency. (Later on, Grey bought into Campaigns, another Filipino agency, creating Campaigns and Grey.)

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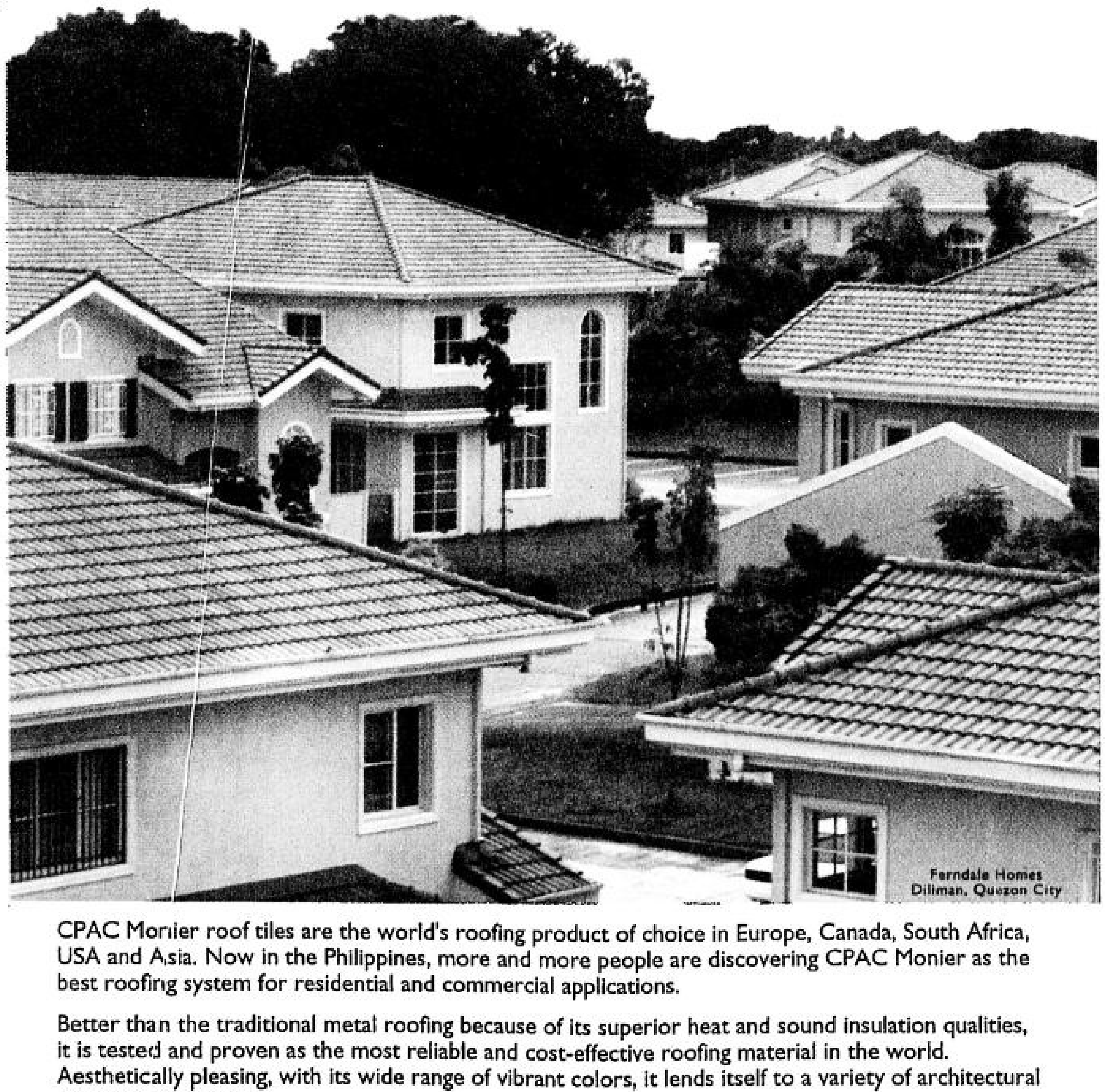

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MAPPING THE FUTURE

Manuel A. Alcuaz Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has recognized ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) as a priority sector for the development of the country.

ICT can have significant impact in the development of the country in two ways:

1. Through the effective use of ICT in the Philippines. We can market and produce goods and services with better quality and lower cost. A number of export industries can become more competitive through the use of ICT.

2. The export of ICT goods and services. The support from the President is a big boost to the local IT industry but this is not enough.

There is a need to support the local IT industry (in fact all industries) with a "Buy Filipino" initiative.

We should not depend on tariffs and government directives. Buy Filipino must be instilled in the hearts and minds of Filipino decision-makers.

I can see the need for this campaign. Recently I have experienced the negative power of the colonial mentality some Filipinos have. Once as a consultant and once as a vendor.

I was recently doing an evaluation of banking software for a client. The final selection went down to two vendors.

A local vendor, Infoserve with several local bank clients with hundreds of branches running the CA/SA application. And a foreign vendor with two banks almost operational with a handful of branches.

My recommendation was for the local vendor:

1. Functionality and ease of use, the two vendors were close. Technology better, Microsoft vs. Sybase. Price P25 million vs. P45 million, a very significant price difference. The bias for what is foreign is very strong. I asked the manager for the bank's branch operations which system he preferred. He said he favored the foreign system—I asked him whether he had been in the demo of the Filipino vendor? He had not even bothered to see the presentation and demo.

The contract almost went to the foreign vendor when one of the vice presidents hastily signed the contract to take advantage of small discount with a deadline. Fortunately, the contract did not go through since there was no prior board approval.

It is ironic that while Infoserve faces an uphill battle selling to local banks against foreign banking software vendors, Microsoft has recognized it internationally.

Infoserve's Mega Banker was selected as the Asian Champion Application Package and was one of the finalists in the Microsoft Fusion in Anaheim this June.

At the Manila Polo Club where I am a member, the board of directors decided to buy a Micros-Fidelio system for the club's POS, food and beverage, financial accounting, and maintenance applications.

The club had gone through a professional evaluation involving an independent IT consultant. My system was recommended.

Unfortunately in September 2000, a new board was elected. The new computerization committee ignored all previous studies and recommended the Micros-Fidelio system on the basis that it was a "Mercedes Benz" and a world standard for hotels.

There was no comparison of functionality, ease of use, or even verification that the proposed software run.

Because I sensed a bias against my local software, I even offered to install my food and beverage (purchasing, inventory and menu system application) with no obligation to the club. Pay when it runs.

The bias for foreign software was very strong. The board approved the purchase last year at a price much higher than my offer and that of another member of the club. Our offers were about P3 million.

The Micros-Fidelio price was kept a secret from the members. Now it is slowly coming out that the club spent about P12 million!

Did the members get any significant benefits for the extra P9 million paid by the club?

One year after, the situation is a near disaster. The POS hangs during the peak hours. Three out of seven expensive touch screen POS stations have been in disrepair for months!

The food and beverage application is not yet fully operational. The monthly bills to the members have been delayed.

People who are big spenders like to claim that they get their money's worth when they pay more for foreign goods. I agree! Your money goes into goods, services, illusions and commissions.

Those who know how to purchase, get a lot of goods and services. Those who are less smart end up paying for illusions (imported, US made, etc.) and perhaps commissions.

I was at the Microsoft.NET Architecture Partner Summit last month. And I was talking to a very senior Microsoft partner from Ecuador who works for a firm that does software export to the US.

He also laments that there is a very strong colonial mentality in Latin America, too. We were both very happy that the Microsoft people at Redmond seem to give us more importance than some Microsoft people back home.

If in our own country we can't sell goods and services against foreign illusions, how will we sell abroad?

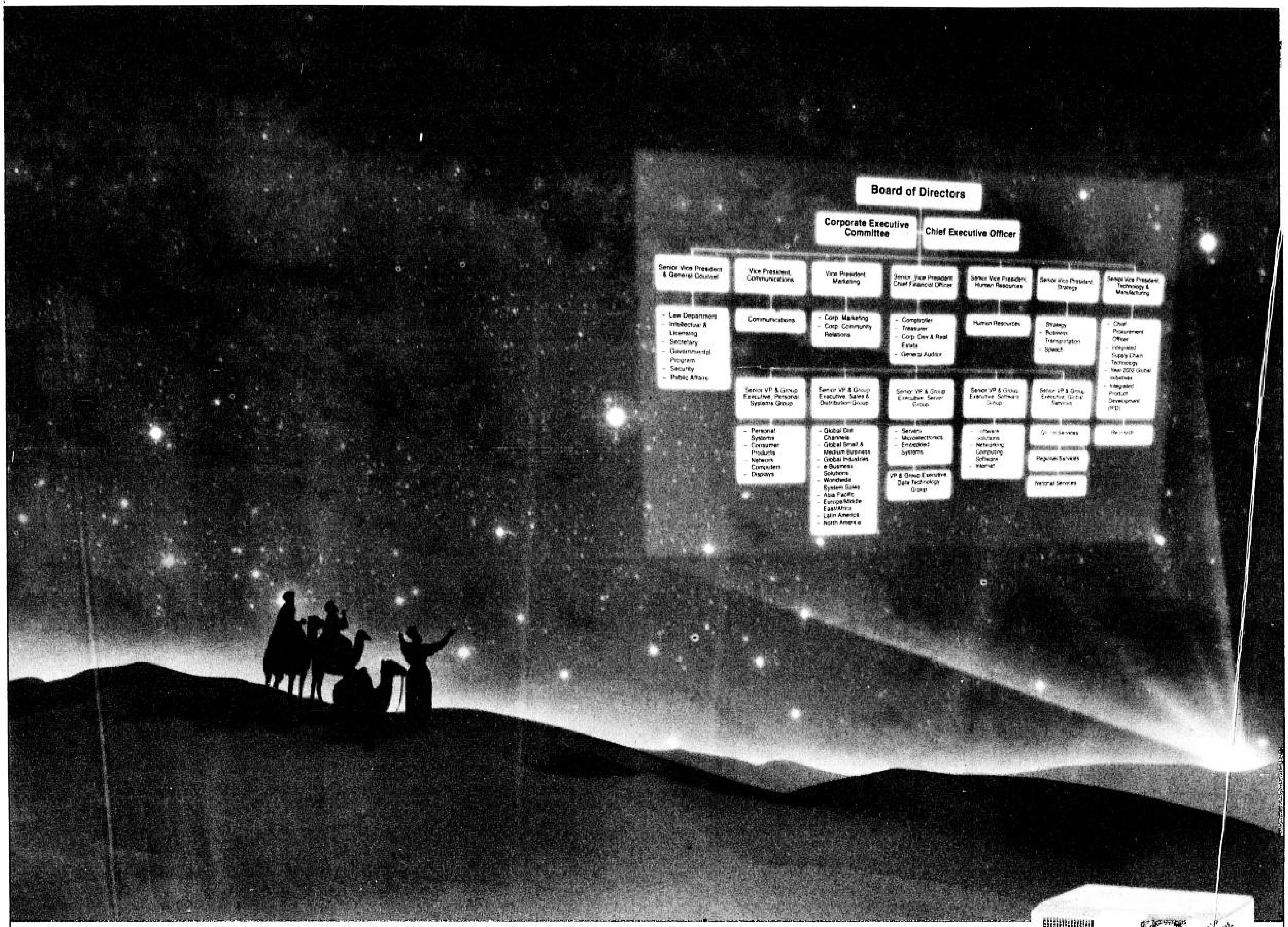
We need a "Buy Filipino" program to be spearheaded by major local businesses. Jollibee used to have such a program. The Chinese Federation has started a Buy Filipino movement.

We have to keep on saying

- the Filipino can
- back this up with success stories
- expert evaluation
- etc.

Kill the colonial mentality that has hampered our development.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author who is a member of the Management Association of the Philippine, president of Systems Sciences Consult Inc. The MAP secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globe.com.ph.)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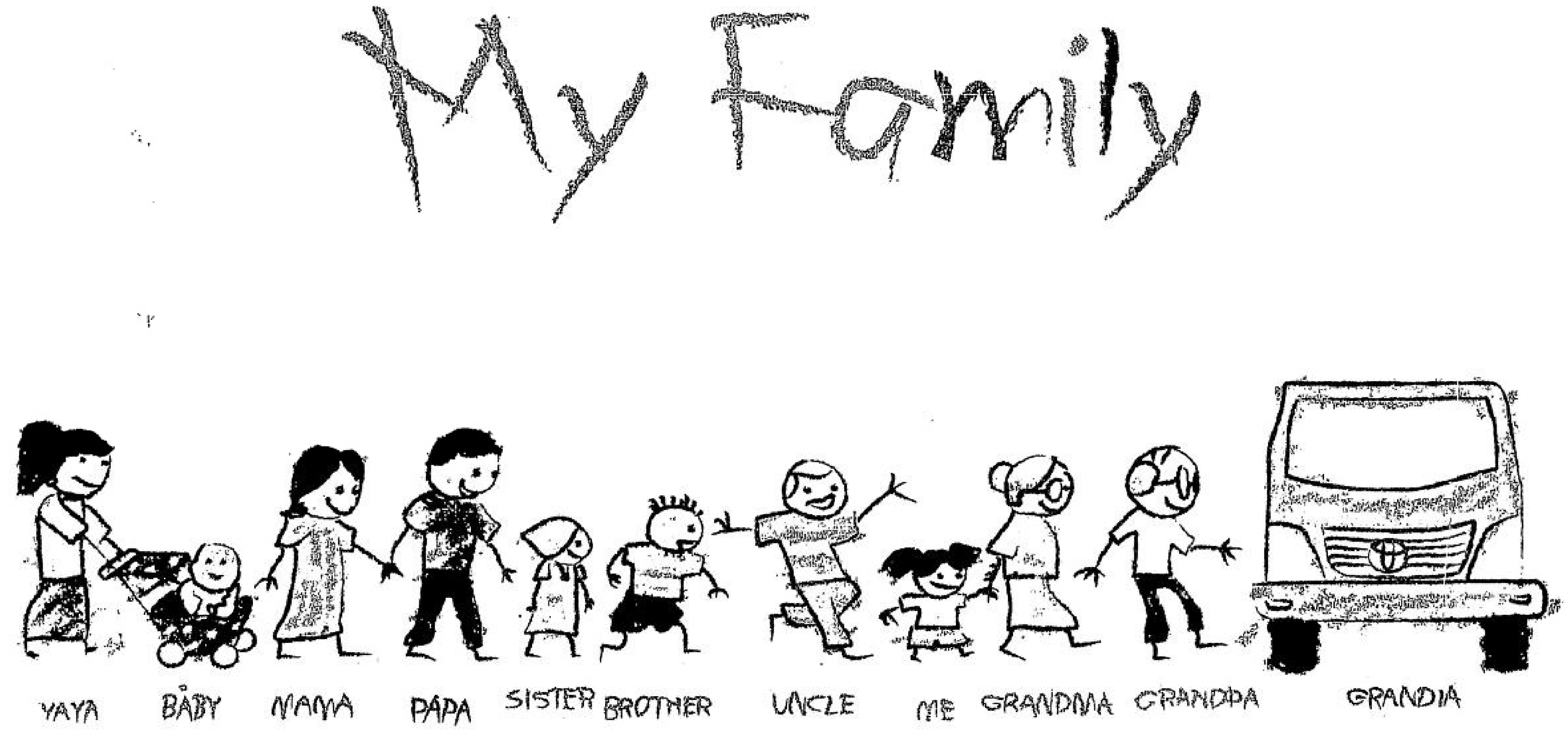
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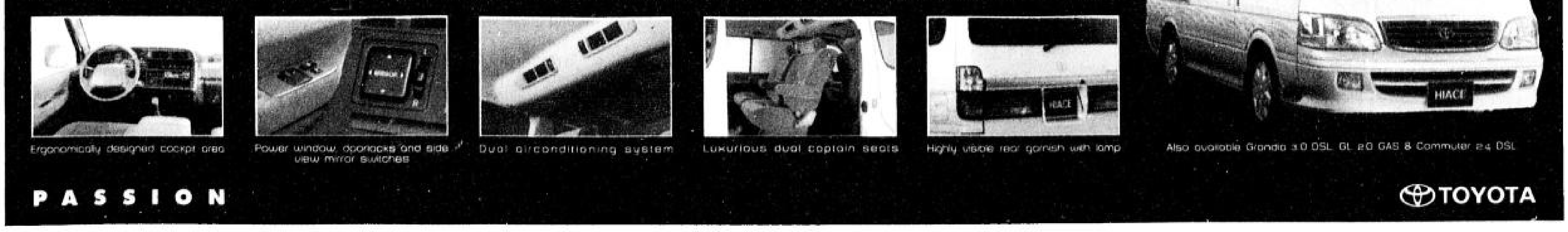

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PASSION

TOYOTA

Vietnam winning war versus poverty

By Angelina G. Goloy

FILIPINO travelers who feel virtually reduced to pauperism with the shrinking of the peso vis-à-vis most foreign currencies would be happy to know that their fortunes would change dramatically in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese currency, the dong, is worth $.0000666, meaning you need 15,000 dong to get a dollar. In other words, with only $100, or P5,200, a visitor would be more than just a millionaire. Even someone of modest means would have money to burn!

As though to reinforce one's feel-rich mood, a local paper published a report on Vietnam's record-breaking success in its fight against poverty while a group of Filipino writers was in Saigon on for a brief visit.

According to a human development report funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Vietnam was able to reduce poverty by 33 percent over the past 10 years, one of the fastest rates on record for any developing country.

The report, prepared by the National Center of Social Sciences and Humanities, attributed the feat to the government's "renovation process," which "galvanized the talents and energy of millions of people, stimulated rapid economic growth, curbed inflation and promoted exports as well as foreign investment."

Details of the report were published in the national English-language daily, *Viet Nam News*.

The report traced Vietnam's success largely to high annual economic growth rates in the early 1990s and the strong performance of the agriculture sector in the late 1980s.

Today Vietnam is a rice exporter. Our tour guide had earlier mentioned that it produced 26 million tons of rice last year and exported 4 million tons to other Asian countries.

One of these is the Philippines, where ironically, our regional neighbors learned modern farming techniques at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

Eduard Wattez, UNDP resident representative in Vietnam, was quoted in the newspaper report as saying that Vietnam's ranking of 101 among 162 countries in terms of the Human Development Index despite a per capita GDP of less than $400 "reflected the impressive gains made in poverty reduction and human development."

The report noted that the literacy rate among adults is more than 90 percent, while primary school enrolment accounted for 95 percent of school-age children in 1998-1999.

At the same time, Vietnam's industrial output continues to increase (by 14.3 percent this year), with bicycle manufacture accounting for the biggest growth at 500 percent.

This is quite evident in this city of 7 million, where practically everyone 18 years and older rides a motorbike, the most common mode of transportation and, which is to their wide, tree-lined roads what the jeepney is to our congested streets.

Thus despite the global slump, Vietnam's economy remains robust, according to news reports, and the World Bank estimates its gross domestic product to rise 6.1 percent this year.

People we met in Saigon acknowledged that the country's rapid growth and development occurred after the government instituted an "open door" policy in 1986, and subsequently policies promoting human development, exports and foreign investments.

Much of the latter is evident in the deluxe, joint-venture hotels and resorts run by international groups. Two of these hotels hosted our group, Omni Saigon and New World.

The Philippines has 18 investment projects in Vietnam, with total capital of $255 million, according to First Secretary and Consul General Erlinda C. Baisa. The investments are in industry and construction (37 percent), hotel and tourism (31.6 percent) and agroforestry (31.4 percent)

Eight projects are joint ventures, the rest are wholly owned by Filipinos. Did you know that there's a Jollibee in Saigon?

As a tourist destination, however, Vietnam is not as popular among Filipinos as the more vibrant Singapore or Thailand.

Vietnam hosts a small Filipino community (about 450), and the few Pinoys who've been there have described Saigon as Manila in the 1980s, remarked Omni PR manager Sharon Samarista.

But on the whole, Vietnam has been getting a good share of the international tourist traffic in recent years, thanks to the government's encouragement of reforms in the tourism industry since 1986, said Lai Huu Phuong, deputy director of SaigonTourist Travel Service Co.

Last year Vietnam recorded 2 million arrivals, meaning it has inched past the Philippines, with 1.9 million visitors.

Only two days before our group arrived, the 240-room Omni Saigon was fully booked, said Eugene Tamesis, director of sales. Even the plush 498-room New World Hotel constantly enjoys high occupancy rates.

"We're still hoping to host more Filipinos, though," said Ed Tongco, director of operations.

PAL, which sponsored the tour, considers Saigon a promising destination and plans to increase its flights to that Vietnamese city from two to three a week by late January, said country manager Ging Ledesma. At present the flag carrier flies to Saigon on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

A big boost to Vietnam's tourism promotion is its being declared the "safest tourism and investment area in the Asia-Pacific" by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC).

This augurs well for Saigon's hosting of the next Southeast Asian Games in 2003.

Twenty-six years after the war ended, Vietnam—displaying a dynamism not easily discernible in the people's quiet and generally traditional ways—is determined to make up for lost time.

WITH only $100 or P5,200, a visitor in Vietnam would be more than just a millionaire.

Nine ways . . .

(From page C1)

ment initiative has to have the crucial buy-in from both suppliers who will now be pushed for cheaper prices, as well as from purchasing employees whose work will henceforth become obsolete.

Keep it simple and elicit collective ownership. Remember, implementing technology involves people, hence forget those acronyms and jargons, and talk instead in the language that people best understand. Next, assign shared accountability through cross-functional teams that allow employees from different levels to participate in the change process. This buy-in is central to minimizing organizational resistance to change.

Invest in data cleanup and don't underestimate the time needed. Time and again the management-information generated by the latest technology is of little value since it mirrors an organizational culture of minimal data integrity. Ensuring data authenticity is, hence, a must if potential opportunities are to be actually translated into real benefits.

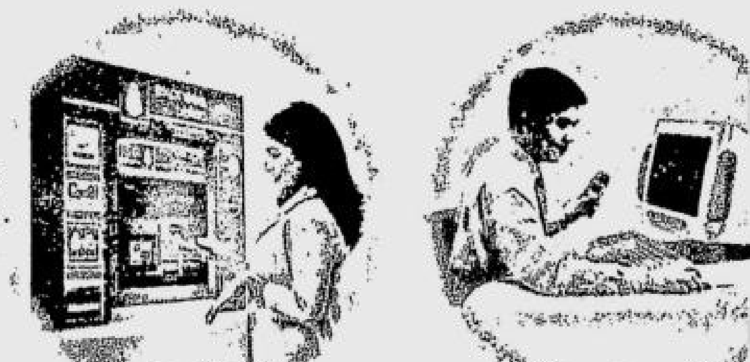
Believe in risk management tools. Roll down the entire implementation schedule into detailed action plans, timelines and deliverables by individuals. Next, measure periodic progress against these so as to keep within the original time and cost estimates. In addition, support this risk infrastructure by prioritizing key execution variables, planning for contingencies and focusing your attention on big-ticket items.

Use the balanced scorecard framework to measure benefits. Measure benefits from a balanced and strategic perspective that includes not only financial parameters but also ones related to customer, internal process, and learning and growth.

Communicate the right message. Remember creating an illusion and then not delivering will do you more harm in the long run as the market and your own employees will stop believing in what you say. It is hence key to manage expectations by being realistic of what you achieved through all this effort.

Finally, embracing new technology that promises to change the way we do business has to deal with the difficult subject of changing peoples behavior and challenging traditional practices. Its success depends little on technology and more on effective change management that helps people come out of their comfort zones. Organizations nimble enough to accept this challenge will secure their sustainable future by reaping actual benefits.

(By Aditya Vir, operations manager, S&G International Consulting Inc., an International Management Consultancy firm based in the Philippines and Asia.)



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BY MYRNA R. CO
UP Institue for Small Scale Industries

GOING INTO BUSINESS

PRODUCTS are not meant to stay inside your factory or warehouse. You've got to get them moving to their final destination—the hands of the people who will use them.

Your products need not be available everywhere but only in places where your customers are likely to look for them. People will not look for your fruit preserves in an appliance store. Nor would they expect to get your expensive bangles and fashion accessories in a neighborhood convenience store.

To push your product from where you make them to where you want them to be, think "distribution channels."

These are the individuals and businesses through which your products will pass on their way to the end users. One of these is the independent sales agent.

Because many small businessmen have a scale of operations that does not justify putting up a full-time sales group, they might consider hiring a sales agent.

Engaging sales agents

Selling for others is the business of independent sales agents. Representing several clients on a commission basis, they solicit orders for clients in certain territories. Some agents are not individuals but firms with employees who help the agent cover a wider area.

Agents can offer a small manufacturer a built-in following in given territories. They have a thorough knowledge of the territory and the customers they serve. Moreover, an agent only gets paid on results.

They are paid, not regular salaries, but a percentage of sales. They also pay for their own travel expenses.

On the other hand, sales agents are specialists in selling only. They can seldom afford to offer service selling. They are not your employees, and so they devote only part of their time to your products because they handle a number of lines.

Agents are free spirits who operate according to the terms of your agreement with them. There is also the danger that when you terminate your relationship with them, they may take a number of your customers to a new client.

Wholesalers and retailers

The alternative to selling through sales agents is selling through wholesalers or retailers or both.

Wholesalers. These are companies that buy in volume from manufacturers and in turn sell the products in smaller volumes to retailers.

Retailers. These are the stores and shops that finally sell the products to the end users or consumers. Retail establishments range in size from the very big department stores and supermarkets to the small corner or sari-sari stores.

Choosing channels

Distribution channels should be designed specifically to meet the needs of your enterprise. For example, if you plan to distribute your product on a nationwide scale, you would find it productive to use agents in conjunction with your own sales force.

New products commonly require distribution channels different from those needed for already well-known products.

For example, a new company started selling its high-priced germicidal toilet soap through drug stores and upscale department stores. When the soap became a well-established product, the company expanded its distribution channels to include supermarkets and grocery stores.

If you are a manufacturer, your distributors and retailers should be willing to work with you on product promotion. You may arrange cooperative advertising with your dealers so that you may share promotion costs.

Avoid using multiple distribution channels as this may lead to conflict. Distribution can be adversely affected unless these conflicts are resolved.

SALES
PRODUCTS
VEP E.

For example, a manufacturer was selling leather bags to department stores. As he was not content with the volume of sales, he thought of distributing the bags through wholesalers.

As a result, the department stores dropped the product because the lower prices offered by the wholesalers made it difficult for them to compete.

Not only should you make sure that your products are available in the right places, but also at the right time.

Marketing at the right time requires that you know when the customers buy your products: daily? weekly? monthly? yearly? Only on payday? Once in a great while? It also means knowing if your product is seasonal or in demand all year round.

Branding

When you distribute your product, you put a brand to it. Brand is the name by which your product will be known. It is important because it is the name by which your product will be identified and will be distinguished from others.

Branding simplifies control of the commercial process. Imagine a buyer in a grocery store agonizing over so many choices of the same product—all unbranded, with nothing to distinguish one from the other!

When you brand your product, you give it the necessary advertising and promotional support. That is the only way to generate interest in your product and create patronage.

A good brand name is one that is easy to recognize and remember. So, it should be short, simple, appropriate and catchy—easy to spell, read and pronounce. It should also be euphonic or pleasant sounding.

Think in terms of "Lux," "Rejoice," "Zesto" and "Presto" rather than "Scheaffers," "Haagen Daz" or "Soie de Reine."

The brand must also be adaptable to packaging and labeling requirements as well as to advertising medium, especially billboards and TV.

Remember that the name you give to your product should be one that is not already being used by another firm. This is why brand names are registered with the Patents Office.

Packaging

Packaging refers to the activities involved in designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product. Don't dismiss packaging as merely added cost. Ultimately, packaging may reduce total distribution costs by:

- Protecting the products and providing ease of physical handling, thus reducing damage and loss.
- Providing more promotional impact than could be obtained in other ways for the same money, thereby increasing sales and turnover.

There are no clear-cut rules for making packaging decisions. The right package depends on such factors as:

- Susceptibility of the product to damage.
- The hazards to which the product will normally be exposed.
- The length of time the product must remain in the package and still be in satisfactory condition.
- The promotional role of the package.

(This article is adapted from "You, Too, Can Start Your Own Business" published by UP ISSI and Serdef. The book is available at selected National Bookstore branches or at UP ISSI. Call up Ving Cinco or Emy Alegro, 926-6376.)

Start . . .

(From page C1)

closing deals with the processing plants.

• Does this trash have commercial value?

Yes, but most people don't realize it. Last year, materials recovered from recycling were purchased at P132.5 million. More are into recycling, and the business has increased in value by 47 percent, compared with that in 1998.

It's not in the World Bank report, but even a big business sees the profitability of recycling. A 1999 Jica study found that Metro Manila trash is highly recyclable and "organic" or can be turned into fertilizer. "There is also a great potential for recycling," says the World Bank report. The market is "relatively large."

Here is the composition of NCR trash:

Recyclable	42%
Paper	19
Plastic	17
Metal	6
Fertilizer potential	49
Kitchen waste	42
Garden waste	7
Others	9

In short only 9 percent of the garbage has no commercial value.

• Does even the organic or biodegradable trash have value as well?

Yes. Barangay Sun Valley in Parañaque city turns the organic waste into compost. It is also converted into food for worms. The worm excrement or vermicast makes great fertilizer and is sold at P35 per kilo.

• How much is currently recycled?

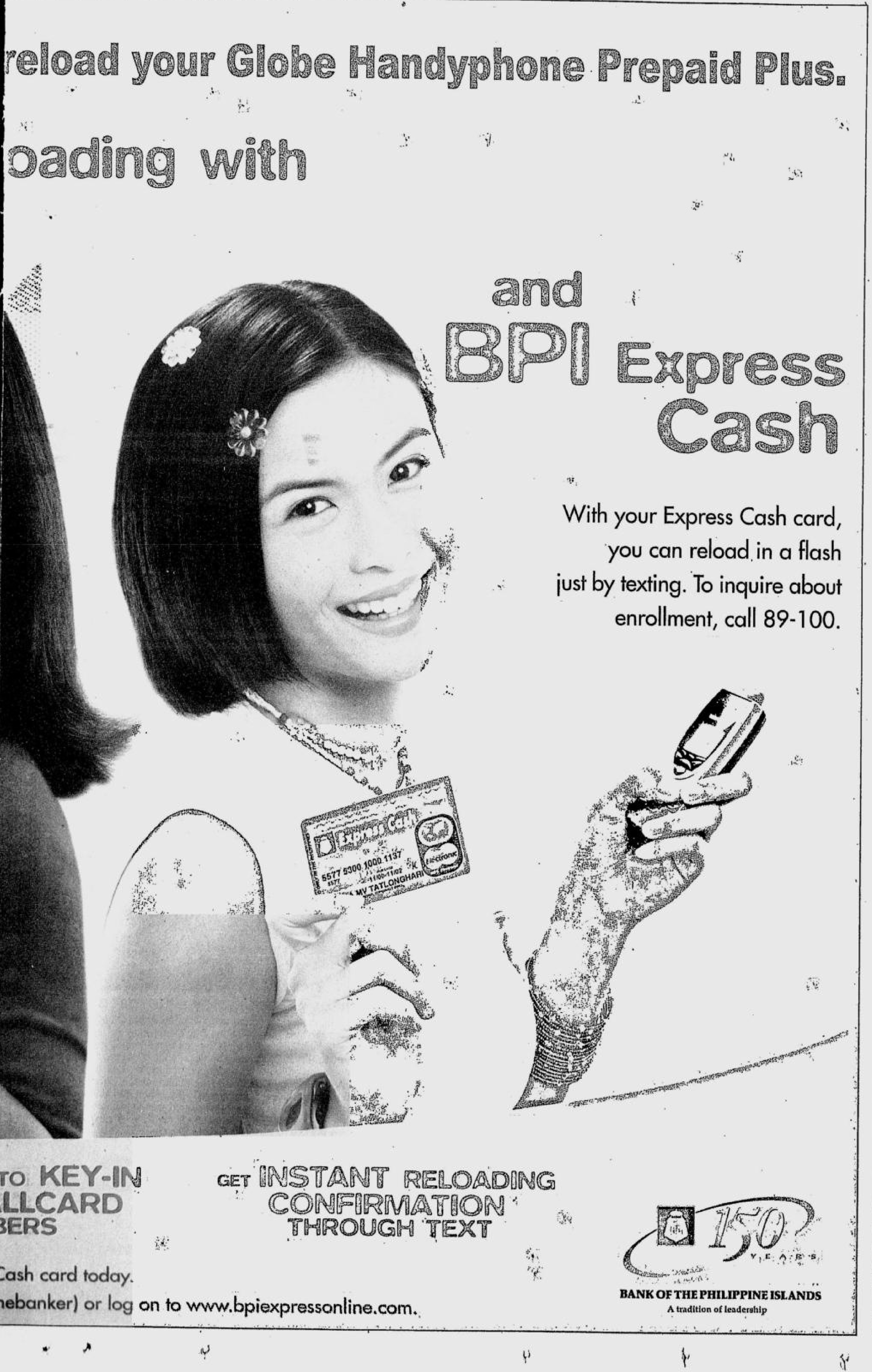
Very little. In 1997 only 6 percent of the garbage in Metro Manila was recycled.

At least by December 2000 the ratio rose to 13 percent, thanks to efforts by the Metro Manila Development Authority and the civil society.

• In the meantime, what can be done about those open dumps like Payatas?

Turn them into controlled dumps, following the example of San Fernando, La Union. The barangays first collect segregated trash and sell what can be recycled to the interested firms. The remaining garbage is processed in separate cells, where it is compacted. The waste is covered with soil.

Ylang-Ylang trees, known for their fragrant flowers, are planted around the site. Bougainvillea and other ornamental plants make the site more pleasing to the eye.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ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Nextel, PNCC forge partnership for road safety

NEXTEL Communications Philippines Inc. (NCPI) and the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) have signed a memorandum of agreement where PNCC uses Nextel handsets to provide added road safety for motorists passing along the North and South Luzon Expressways.

As per the agreement signed by PNCC chair and CEO lawyer Luis Sison and Nextel chair Jose Alejandro, the PNCC acquired from Nextel hundreds of handsets which feature the latter's Direct-Connect (two-way radio) services.

The two-way radio service is expected to improve communication among toll operators for more efficient response to vehicular accidents along the highways. The service also hopes to enhance the traffic situation regulation of PNCC's covered areas.

As defined in the MOA, Nextel has activated an emergency hotline for motorists passing along these major thoroughfares. The assistance numbers (7622 for Nextel users and 0979-7777622 for non-Nextel users) can be called on 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Nextel has also put up road safety reminders along the expressways that contain the emergency hotlines.

The PNCC chose Nextel among the various telecommunication companies because of its superior product offerings and state-of-the-art wireless technology.

The partnership is part of Nextel Communications Philippines Inc.'s thrust as a responsible corporate citizen.

EPLDT SIGNS MOA WITH INFOCOM

EPLDT sighed recently a memorandum of agreement with Infocom to provide unified messaging service to the public. Shown during the signing ceremonies are (from left) ePLDT strategy and business development manager Kathryn Concepcion-Carag, ePLDT managing director Ray Espinosa, Infocom chief operating officer Cecilio Lorenzo, ePLDT managing director Ariel Roda and Infocom marketing manager Melanie Tan. Infocom, a PLDT subsidiary and of the country's leading Internet service providers, will market ePLDT's iComMand unified messaging service under the brand name Infocom MailCENTRAL.

TRIKE DRIVER TO USE CELLPHONE IN BUSINESS

To support his young family, 27-year-old tricycle driver Hernando Jaranillos of Calamba, Laguna works from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Competition for passengers is fierce, the soft-spoken Hernando says, so when he became one of many winners of a prepaid phone kit from Globe Handyphone in 'Sagot ka ng Coca-Cola', he had an idea: his regular passengers can now text him whenever they need his services. Hernando is shown receiving his new Nokia from Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. Calamba Plant personnel officer Jude Javier. Apart from the phone kits, the recent nationwide consumer promo gave away thousands of instant P250 Globe Handyphone Prepaid Plus call cards and millions of free Coca-Cola products.

AMA supports Family Christmas Build 2001

THE AMA Education System (Amaes) has given its ardent commitment to support the Family Christian Build 2001, a project of the Habitat for Humanity Philippines (HFHP), with a house donation as part of its continuing community services.

A memorandum of agreement was recently forged between Amaes president Amable C. Aguiluz IX and HFHP managing director Jose Maria M. Mendoza as they become partners in building simple but decent homes for economically disadvantaged families.

The Amaes considers this meritorious partnership as an opportunity to spend this Christmas season with a giving heart and helping hands. This was not the first time that the two respected organizations have joined forces to alleviate poverty housing. Back in 1999, AMA helped the HFHP in encoding its database of the first 1,000 companies who committed themselves in helping the foundation make low-cost yet stable houses available to impoverished families nationwide.

The HFHP is a non-profit ecumenical Christian housing ministry founded in 1976 in Georgia in the United States by Millard and Linda Fuller. The organization has grown and reached the Philippines with the collaborative support of corporations, churches, organizations, schools and other institutions and individuals.

To date, HFHP has built more than 3,500 houses in various regions of the country and aims to build 2,000 more houses this year.

As the leading and largest IT-based education provided in Asia, AMA has not forgotten its social responsibility of not only educating the poor but also taking part in giving them mass housing as well.

The AMA officers, employees, and students are then set to participate on a one-week house building activity and will generously spend time digging foundations, welding steel bars, and even painting walls at Fairview Habitat Village. The event is expected to relive the *bayanihan* spirit inherent in the AMA community and in every Filipino.

PGMA EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Bato Balani Foundation Inc. (BBFI), a private corporate foundation engaged in the management of education development programs in the country, recently turned over P15 million worth of assistance in the form of book donation and library materials and teacher training in basic education under the foundation's 'Tulong sa Paaralan, Tulay sa Kaunlaran' (TSP-TSK) book donation and 'How To Be A Highly Effective Teacher' teacher-training seminar to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo educational program. Shown is PGMA welcoming Dr. Milagros Ibe, a well-known educator and one of BBFI's member of the board of advisers and Amada J. Javellana and Jun T. Calditaran, two of the foundation's members of the board of trustees, as the group presents a part of the donation package.

FIGARO OPENS IN BOHOL AVENUE

Figaro Coffee Company opens its second outlet in Quezon City. Shown during the soft opening are (from left) Yoya Tanseco, Patsy Francisco, franchisees Bernadette Escudero and Suzanne Escudero and Dr. Ramon Francisco of Figaro. The newest branch is on the ground floor of El Jardin del Presidente Condo, near ABS-CBN. Figaro Bohol is open for breakfast until midnight. Other streetside locations are on Tomas Morato, LPL Greenhills, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas, and C. Palanca in Legaspi Village, Makati. Log on to www.figarocoffee.com or call 751-1801.

BITS Clips

Grand fireworks at ATC

HOLIDAY shoppers at Alabang Town Center can catch the amazing Christmas fireworks display at the Town Plaza every Saturday and Sunday, 7 p.m., to be accompanied by the music of Louie Ocampo. The grand fireworks display, next slated on Dec. 22, 23, 29 and 30, is part of Alabang Town Center's series of festive events to celebrate the holidays. Other highlights include a special concert by singing sensation Aiza Seguerra and Pido on Dec. 28, as well as the angelic sound of some of the best college chorales such as the DLSU Pops Orchestra, UP Concert Chorus and Ateneo Glee Club on Dec. 21, 22 and 23.

Edsa Shangri-La holiday bazaar

FOR UNIQUE gifts this Christmas season, visit the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel Holiday Gifts Bazaar scheduled on Dec. 22 and 23 at the Lower Lobby, Boracay and Lubang. Shoppers can get one-of-a-kind products from all over the world, plus the best of Philippine crafts at manufacturers' prices. For details, call Philtrade Exhibits at 820-7879, 820-1570.

'Rediscover…look good and feel good'

THE FIRST Health, Beauty and Fitness Expo, dubbed as "Rediscover…Look Good and Feel Good!" will be held from Jan. 18-20, 2002 at the SM Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Organized by The Next Step Events Planners, this prestigious event will showcase facial and skin products, health and food supplements, fitness center health services, spa and other product lines and services that cater to both men and women who are into enhancing their "true beauty". A three-day event will also feature seminars on reflexology, accupressure and aroma candle making, product demonstrations, makeovers, daily raffles, fitness demos, and skin care consultation. For more information on sponsorship, exhibit details and seminars, call the organizer at 893-9729/ 813-0148, or 753-5114.

Komiks Boutique Resto's holiday activities

EVERY Wednesday night is "Caricature" night. Your group portrait will be done on the spot by its house artist for free, if you dine in at the restaurant every Wednesday night. The Kenkoy Kris Kringle, ongoing until Dec. 30, lets you get a chance to pick a holiday gift certificate from the holiday stockings every time you dine in at Komiks Boutique Resto. Komiks Boutique Resto is open every night from 6 p.m. until dawn—except on Dec. 24 and Jan. 1. Komiks Boutique Resto is along J. Nakpil corner M. Orosa Street, Malate, Manila. For more details, call 526-2547.

ELECTROWORLD
e-pay
e-pay ASIA

RETAILER AGREEMENT WITH ELECTROWORLD

e-Pay Asia Phils. Inc., the leader of electronic pre-paid services in the country, signed a 'Retailer Agreement' with Electroworld, making the latter one of its distributors. Electroworld, one of the leading distributors of computer products and business machines, has 17 outlets nationwide, located at malls and other shopping centers. Present during the signing were (from left) Winston Lim, Electroworld business development manager; Marilette de Vera, business manager; Wilton Ngo, Abenson Sales Corp. president; Rob Marabut, e-Pay Asia country manager; Lynne Cabreros, e-Pay sales manager, traditional accounts; and Cyril Soriano, e-Pay sales manager, non-traditional accounts.

United Nations Day Celebration
Commemorative U.N. Le
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Awarding
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BPI FOUNDATION, ZONTA SPONSORS UN DAY

BPI Foundation, in cooperation with the Zonta Club of Bacolod City, sponsored the United Nations Day celebration in Negros Occidental recently. Activities included the 'Search for the Most Commemorative U.N. Learning Resource Center,' participated in by all the secondary public schools in the city. BPI distributed copies of Blair and Robertson's Philippine Islands CD-ROM to the public schools during the awarding ceremonies. Shown receiving the CD-ROM from BPI manager Mike Villa-Real is the first prize winner of the search, Domingo Lacson National High School, represented by coordinator Rudy Lene. Also shown are Zonta Club president Salud Javelosa and Mila Moya.

AVON BLOOMS IN TONDO

Global beauty company Avon recently opened its newest branch located in Tondo, Manila. As the 104th branch store in the Avon network nationwide, the Tondo branch promises to be another strong contender in terms of sales performance. Present during the event were (from left, front row) Angel Bernaldo, Avon finance director; Alice Seno, Avon customer service and operations director; Maricarl Tolosa, Bb. Pilipinas International 2001; Gilrhea Quinzon, Bb. Pilipinas World 2001; Glecy Bagasin, Avon human resources director; Libby Calvadores-Cenizal, Tondo branch sales manager; Bevs Joson, Avon customer service and operations group manager; (second row, from left) Nestor de Guzman, Tondo branch operations manager; Mike Gorres, Avon IT director; (third row, from left) Nick Sison, Avon area sales manager; Roy Yu (partially hidden), Avon sales director; Mutya ng Pilipinas titlist; Carlene Aguilar, Ms. Philippines 2001 titlist; and Paul Lancos, Avon VP for marketing.

Hapee extends price cut-off

AS A responsible corporate citizen, and in the spirit of Christmas, Hapee is extending its 20-percent price cut-off on Hapee Pure White toothpaste and Hapee Sparkling Gels until Dec. 31. Hapee is proud to provide the Filipino with high-quality products at affordable prices—value for money—especially in the light of the tough economic times. Hapee Pure White has maximum fluoride protection as approved by the BFAD, and is fortified with calcium for stronger teeth. Hapee Pure White also contains Allantoin and Vitamin B which both help promote healthy gums. Hapee continues to be active in sponsoring and helping support various socio-civic groups, including the handicapped community and the country's youth, keeping the spirit of giving alive throughout the year.

Take the cool way to earn

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IN A TROPICAL country like the Philippines, it is quite a challenge to keep products looking and tasting fresh. Food spoils faster because of the humidity and high temperatures, which cause bacteria to grow faster than in cooler climates.

Retailers are also faced with a bigger challenge these days as Filipino consumers have grown more health conscious and are demanding more fresh food.

This means that supermarkets, hypermarts and convenience stores have to be constantly on the lookout for the best equipment to maintain freshness of food.

Failure to do so means millions of pesos in losses because of spoiled food.

Shopwise

The Shopwise Supercenter, the newest member of the Rustan Group of Companies, a P10-billion retail conglomerate, pioneered the supercenter concept in the Philippines in 1998. As a supercenter, it houses a full-line supermarket and general merchandise store in a free-flowing, shopping cart environment.

It has generated a loyal following among the middle classes and Catherine Y. Tantoco, vice president for merchandising of Rustan Supercenters Inc., says one of the reasons behind it is the group's fresh section, which is one of the biggest among the supermarkets in the city.

Tantoco said in an interview that the fresh section—including processed meat, fish, seafood, and fruits and vegetables—occupies about a third of the store space. It is expensive to operate, she said, which was why it was imperative for Shopwise to continue to lure the consumers in by offering the freshest and widest selection of merchandise.

The Shopwise group uses the Bonnetneve brand of refrigerated equipment with its closed showcases. Tantoco said they chose the brand because of energy efficiency and the customer-friendly features that slow the spoilage rate.

Keeping products fresh, however, does not start and end with having the best or the most expensive refrigeration equipment. It is an entire process that starts from the time the products are brought in from the suppliers to the time they land in the refrigerators of the consumers.

"It is very hard to rely on other people to keep the products fresh which is why we have our own staff that handles the fresh products. They personally go to the fish vendors and meat suppliers to check the quality. It is only by this way that we can assure our customers that the products are indeed fresh," Tantoco stressed.

For the meat products, Shopwise staff check the facilities of the suppliers to make sure that the facilities are certified as top grade by the National Meat Inspection Commission. From there they also make sure that the trucks or loading facilities that transport the products from the farms to the store are refrigerated, with the temperature kept at between 2 and 4 degrees Centigrade.

"When the trucks arrive at the store, the products are immediately put into meat rails and then put into our chilled facilities at the back of the store. We try to keep products free from as much human contact as possible," she said.

There are separate facilities for the meat, fish, seafood, fruits and vegetables, and there are different temperature requirements for each product. Keeping them separate not only keeps bacteria away but it also prevents the meat from smelling like fish or vice versa.

"We check the temperature at least three times a day because of the fluctuating electricity supply. Even if we have voltage regulators, we have to manually check the temperature gauges. We also employ a first in, first out policy so we mark the day that the products come in so we know which ones to sell first," she says.

For the fish, Shopwise's people go direct to the fish ports. Fish are kept chilled, not frozen, to retain the flavor. These are packed in insulated containers with ice and salt as preservatives. Crabs are kept in containers with no water.

For fruits and vegetables, Shopwise also goes direct to the small farmers to speed up the distribution process and keep prices competitive.

The process does not end when the meat, fish, and fruits and vegetables are laid out beautifully on the refrigerated shelves. Shopwise has staff who are tasked to clean and wash the equipment practically every day to again stop the degeneration process.

"If you don't wash the refrigerated areas, lard will accumulate in the meat section and bacteria will grow in the fruit and vegetable section, causing them to rot. This is one reason why we always say that it is hard to operate a fresh unit. It is very expensive if you don't know how to do it properly," Tantoco said.

Big R

While the Shopwise Supercenter chooses to keep their fresh products behind closed showcases, Big R, the supercenter of the Robinsons group of companies, prefers to use open chillers, saying that it is friendlier to the customers.

Fernando Yu, operations director of the Big R Supercenter, said in an interview that the management went around the different parts of the world to check out the latest trends. They finally decided on buying chillers with no doors because these entice customers to purchase the fresh products.

The Linde refrigerated equipment can carry more products because even the floor level shelf can carry products. At night, a special curtain comes down to keep the products fresh overnight. These new lines of refrigerated equipment also consume less electricity than other facilities, significantly lowering operating costs.

"We have one of the biggest areas for fresh products because we want to cater to the demand for more fresh products. I believe that we also offer the widest variety of products for fresh food and we try to keep the prices at the same level as the wet market," Yu said.

He explained that the goal of any fresh section is to provide an alternative to the wet market, the reason being the higher level of hygiene that they provide and the quality standards that they adhere to.

Aside from the open chillers and freezers at the Big R, there are also cold room facilities at the back room where ice cream, hotdogs, fruits and vegetables, and other products are kept before transferring them to the showcases. All products are brought to the back room upon delivery.

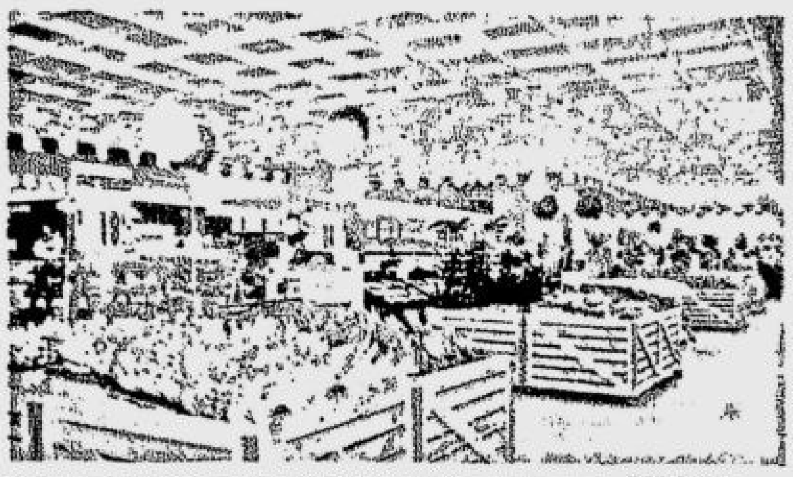
"We check the temperature daily because keeping the right temperature is crucial to keeping products fresh and prolonging the shelf life. There are different temperatures followed for different products," Yu said.

The Big R manual shows that ice cream should be kept at -20C to -15C. Dimsum is kept at between -15C to -10C, seafood at -5C to 0C, fresh chicken and assorted meat at 0C to 4C, fruits 6C to 10C and vegetables at 8C and 12C.

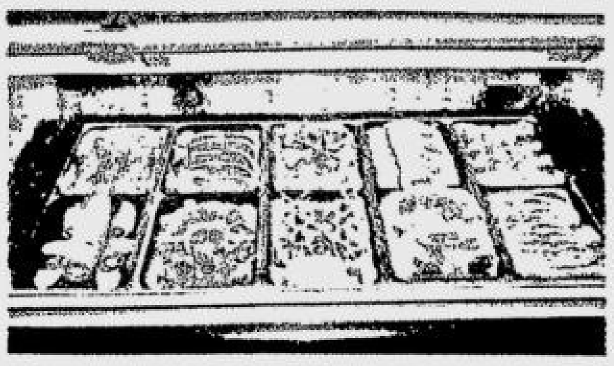
Yu said the processed meat products such as hotdogs sell the best among the fresh or chilled items, followed by pork, chicken and beef. Seafood comes next although the wet markets still corner a big portion of the seafood market.

"We realize that the only way to survive in the retail industry is to study the market and to research. Our studies showed that people will buy more fresh food which is why we invested in the latest in refrigerated equipment," Yu said.

People buy more fresh food because of the changing lifestyles and preference of the buying public. He added that the fresh section truly differentiates the best retail outlets from the rest.



BIG R has one of the biggest fresh food sections.



THE FRESH section in Shopwise occupies about one third of space.

MOVEMENTS

Platinum Plans appointments

Platinum Plans, one of the country's leading pre-need firms in the country, announced the recent appointment of Don Maria Y. Dia as vice president-treasurer & financial director.

A marketing management graduate from San Juan de Letran, Dia obtained his MBA from the De La Salle University and took up an Advanced Bank Management program at the Asian Institute of Management.

He started his professional career in banking at Allied Bank, later on joining Far East Bank and Trust Co. From Far East Bank, he joined Lapanday Agri-Development Corp. and Amtrust Financial Consultants where he was head of treasury operations and VP, chief financial officer, respectively.

He was last connected with Prime Bank where he headed the Corporate Finance Group.

After a brief stay in the bank, he went into consultancy for two years until he joined Platinum Plans.

As head of the Finance Group at Platinum Plans, he will be overseeing the treasury department, billing and collection, and asset management and investments.

HBO Asia changes

HBO Asia, the leading home entertainment provider, has announced that Mack Perryman, senior vice-president of programming and promotion, plans to return to the United States at the end of 2001.

Quek Toi Mien, currently the senior director of programming and scheduling, will be head of programming while Karen Ng, senior Director of on-air promotion, will now head on-air promotion and production efforts.

Perryman has been with HBO Asia since the inception of the company and was part of the original team that moved to Singapore in 1992 to launch the HBO and Cinemax channels.

He has been in charge of programming, on-air promotion and research.

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HONDA

BUSINESSMonday

Family thrives on selling appliances at a discount

BY ANNE LUISA E. VILLARICO

NOT all people have enough cash to buy household appliances in an instant. Most of the time, a typical Filipino customer prefers to pay on *"hulugan"* or installment terms, to make it easier for them to buy the appliance they have set their eyes on.

This *"hulugan"* scheme clicked so well for Royal Star Marketing Inc.

Serving mostly average income market families in the province, the once small appliance store in Calamba has now boomed its retail network to 31 branches spread in the Southern Tagalog to become one of the biggest appliance chains in the region.

And even with tough competition, it makes its entry into Metro Manila by opening five more stores by the end of the year.

Royal Star's first Manila store opened at the Metropolis Mall in Alabang last Nov. 15, followed by its Star Mall Edsa/Shaw Boulevard branch two days later.

NEXT generation Dennis Lazaro and Rizza Belarmino

This month alone, Royal Star opened three more outlets at the Guadalupe Shopping Center along Edsa, Shoe Avenue in Marikina and Sta. Lucia Mall in Cainta.

Royal Star's popularity for the class CD market gained its slogan *"Ang appliance store ng bayan."*

The appliance chain is the fruit of years of hard work and perseverance by husband-and-wife entrepreneur tandem of Angelito and (now Laguna governor) Ningning Lazaro.

In the early '60s and '70s, Ningning, a public school teacher by profession, used to sell household items such as pots and pans which she bought from Divisoria and later National-Panasonic appliance products to her friends, co-teachers and neighbors in Calamba and Cabuyao on a *"hulugan"* basis.

During that time, modern technology was just starting to be introduced in the country. Selling household appliances like black and white TVs and transistor radios was a hit. Advertising their business is usually done by word of mouth.

Having no other competitor at that time and to further respond to the growing customer demand, Ningning had to give up her full-time teaching job and focus on establishing Royal Star which opened its first outlet in the couples' hometown in 1974.

Its capital came from profits gained from her *"hulugan"* business. Royal Star was the first pioneer local appliance chain in Calamba.

Angelito, who was into duck-raising at that time became more involved in managing Ningning's appliance business because it was doing so well.

Eventually, he shifted to her business and went hands-on to help her manage the company's expansion in the '80s, during which they already had six stores.

Now, the Lazaro children have taken reins of managing the Royal Star appliance chain.

Dennis Lazaro is the Royal Star EVP while Rizza L. Belarmino is the VP for marketing.

Dennis, 33, an Agri-business graduate from UP Los Baños with a master's degree in business management from the Asian Institute of Management, recalls his parent's marketing style when they were just starting to run the business.

THE FOUNDERS: Ningning Lazaro and Angelito Lazaro

"Siya (Angelito) yung naglalako dala ang sasakyan (which is an owner type jeep) and he will go around the barangay. *Pagtigil nya, dun lapitan ang mga tao, titingnan kung ano ang mabibili, kung may kursunada bibili. . ."* says Dennis.

Rizza, 32, also witnessed how her mother would spend so much time and effort in the stores—she would wake up early in the morning and sleep late at night. She would do many things including tagging prices.

She also takes time to personally supervise the salesclerks.

Rizza says that at a young age, she was forced to help tend the store, which she initially disliked because she was not interested in venturing into business.

Rizza took a pre-med course also in UPLB but decided to help her parents run their business during her first year in medicine proper.

Dennis attributes the success of the company to his hardworking parents' honesty to customers and personal touch in managing the business. He also says his parents are confident that those applying for loans will pay their dues on time because they know them personally.

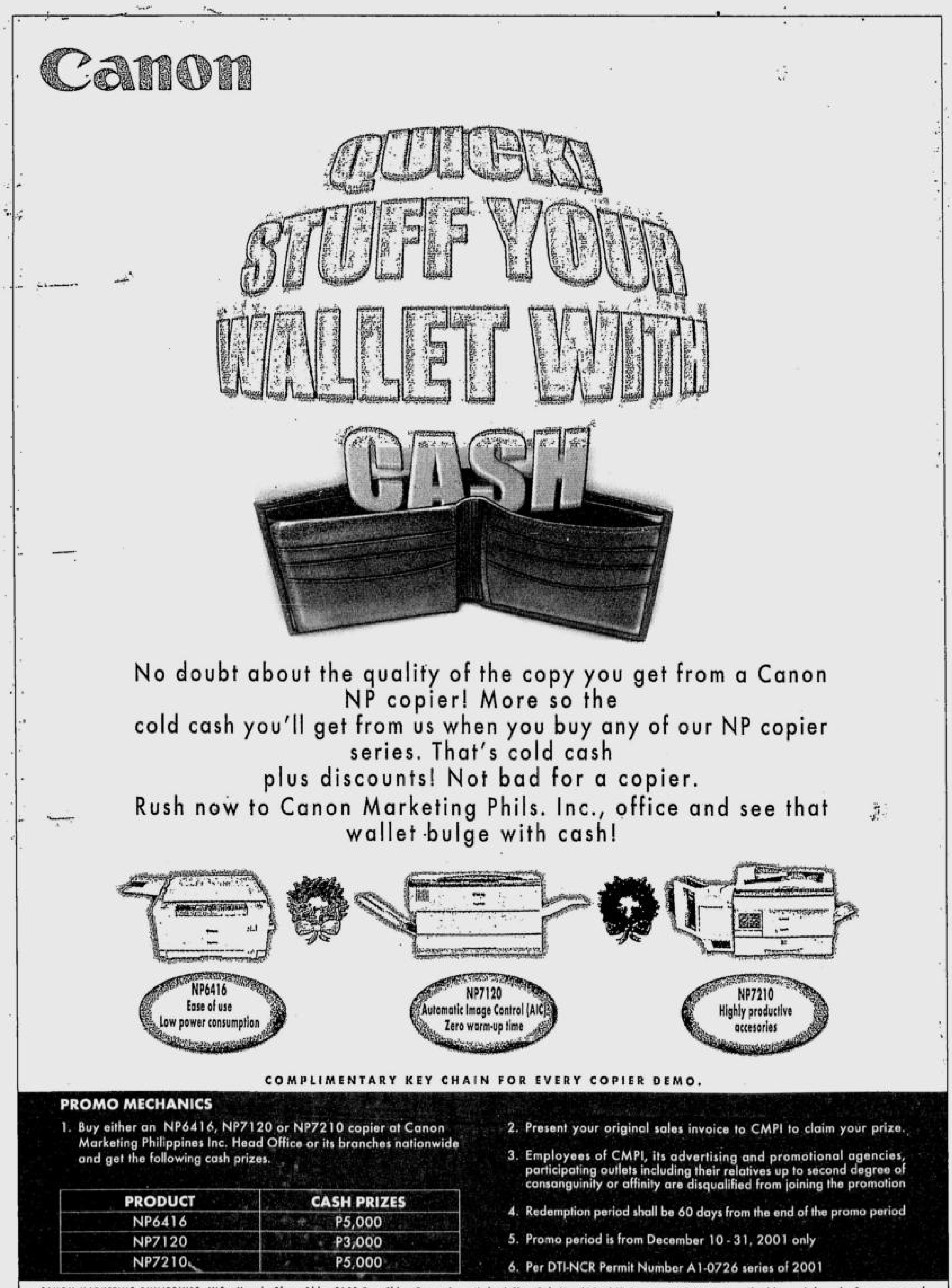
Royal Star had also thrived despite the many setbacks that their business had faced such as the lack of capital, and the problems brought about by adding more branches.

"*Dati, walang magpautang na bangko kasi wala kaming iko*-collateral, Ningning says.

Although the second generation is taking more active roles, the siblings say they will maintain the ways of their parents.

By appldying a more modern management style, they will pursue the same mission of enabling lower to middle income families enjoy the same comfort and convenience of having their own household appliances.

These methods include special discounts, easy installment scheme and efficient customer relations that make their customers come back for repeat orders.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WIM Duisenberg, president of the European Central Bank (right) and director of Europol Juergen Storbeck shake hands in Frankfurt, Germany, after the signing of an agreement aimed at ensuring effective cooperation between both parties in protection of the euro.

European officials warn: Beware of counterfeit euros

FRANKFURT, Germany—As banks and stores get ready for the launch of euro notes and coins on Jan. 1, counterfeiters are also likely hard at work, hoping to take advantage of unfamiliarity with the new money to pass off fakes, European officials warned on Thursday.

For up to two months after Jan. 1, cashiers will have to juggle both national currencies and the new euros, which they and consumers will still be getting used to. In the confusion, officials worry that counterfeiters—both hardcore professionals and opportunistic amateurs—will try to take advantage.

"For amateur copies, the most dangerous period is during the dual circulation period," said Willy Bruggeman, deputy director of police agency Europol and the head of its euro project. "We expect that we will see some amateurs try to test the system."

Amateur counterfeits—typically produced by a computer with a scanner and an inkjet printer—are usually so crude that a second look easily distinguishes them from the real thing, Bruggeman said.

Such fakes have already turned up in small quantities in attempts to con people into exchanging money ahead of time.

The longer-term threat comes from the professionals, who use bulky offset printing presses that produce better fakes, Bruggeman said. They can't equal the print quality of the real money either, but their quantities are higher and they can come surprisingly close to duplicating security features such as watermarks.

In an attempt to slow down the pros, the bank decided not to release the bills ahead of Jan. 1. Starting Friday, banks will sell starter kits to give people a chance to see what euros look like—but with coins only. The currency may not be used until Jan. 1.

There are, however, many euro bills already out that counterfeiters could use as guides. The banknotes have been distributed widely to banks and some stores in advance of the launch and several million euros were stolen in robberies of an armored car in Germany and a postal depository in Italy.

In an effort to fight euro counterfeiting, European Central Bank president Wim Duisenberg signed an agreement on Thursday with Europol head Juergen Storbeck to share information and coordinate efforts by national police.

While acknowledging the potential threat of counterfeiting, Duisenberg said he was confident security measures incorporated into the design of the new euros should protect consumers.

"Citizens can be confident that the euro is a safe currency and one which few residents will have the misfortune ever to see a counterfeit of," said Duisenberg at the signing ceremony at bank headquarters in Frankfurt.

The European Central Bank has also been running a public information campaign telling people to "feel, look and tilt" to detect fakes. The euro, like the dollar, uses special paper and has a raised feel to the printing. It also has holograms, a security thread, and color-shifting ink.

It lacks one of the oldest and simplest devices—the human face—where defects in fake US dollars are often easy to spot. No monarchs, presidents or national heroes are on the euro bills, which instead have bridges and gates to symbolize European unity and openness. Countries were allowed to use national figures on the coins, which are still good throughout the zone.

The risk of encountering counterfeit euros is probably higher outside the euro zone, in Eastern Europe where there has been less of an attempt to educate cash handlers and the public ahead of time, officials said.

Authorities in Bulgaria, known to Interpol as a major counterfeiting center, are bracing for the emergence of fake euros.

In several raids this past year, police broke up three rings in the cities of Plovdiv, Ruse and Kazanlak. In Plovdiv alone, police seized $875,000 in counterfeit dollars and 50,000 bogus German marks—Europe's two favorite currencies to fake. *AP*

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Arts & Design

NCCA lists ancient churches for restoration

Conclusion

SPACED OUT

Augusto F. Villalon

THE NATIONAL Commission for Culture and the Arts requested Regalado Trota José, the foremost specialist in church art and architecture in the Philippines and honored in 1999 as one of the 100 Centennial Artists by the Cultural Center of the Philippines, to prepare a list of 25 significant churches that will comprise the first phase of a restoration program funded by the NCCA. Since many church structures of outstanding quality exist in the country and each has its own restoration needs, the process of limiting the list to 25 churches was difficult so the final list includes 26 sites. The 26 sites are of equal ranking, all having heritage significance to the

NCCA/ p.D6

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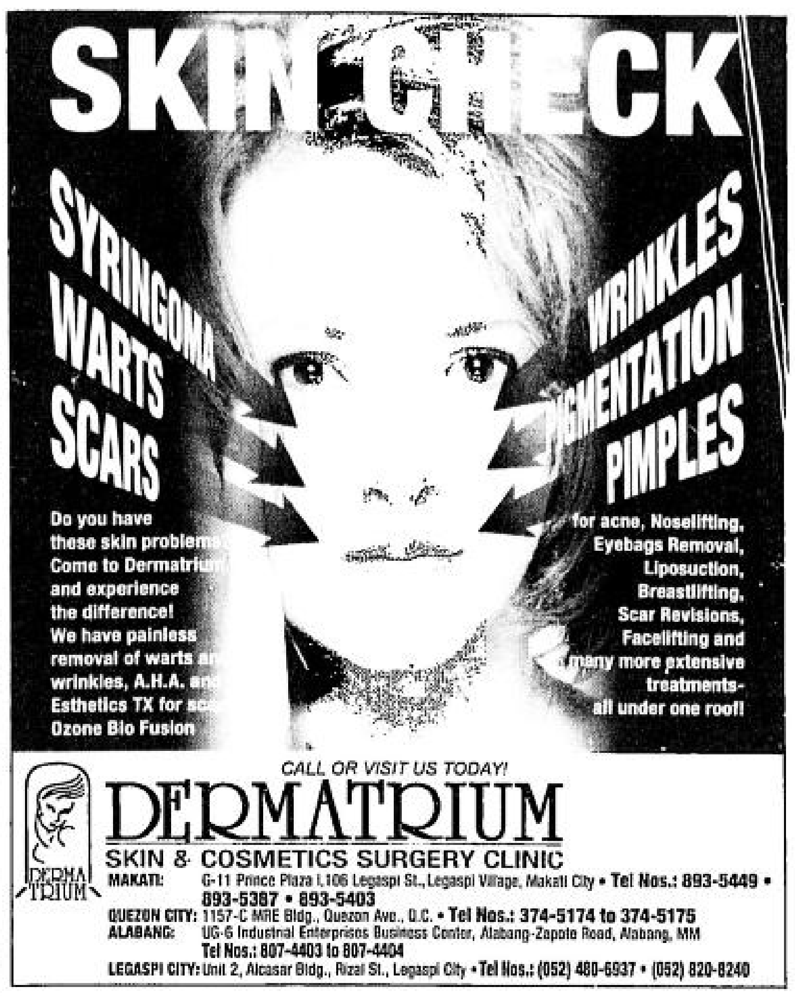
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2. Non-winning Image Model and Lucky Searcher entries are also qualified for the draws. So send as many entries as you can!

* *Entries must be received at least 5 days before the screening/draw dates: (1st) Jan. 16, 2002, (2nd) Mar. 18, 2002; (3rd) May 16, 2002*

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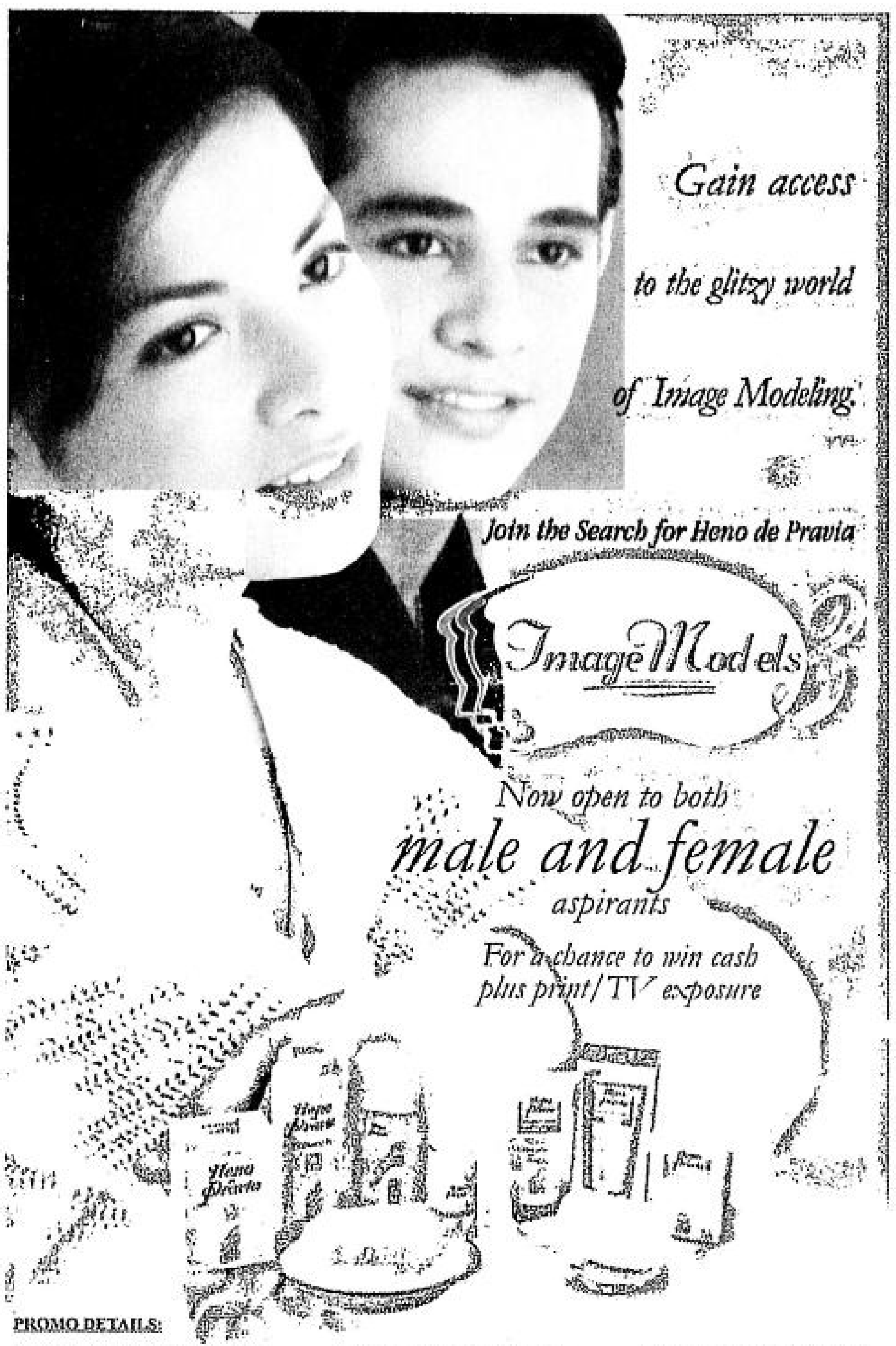
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Photogenic quality and image projection - 50%
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Must possess a beautiful (or handsome) face with clear complexion.

Selection of Finalists:
Only 10 final candidates (5 males, 5 females) who meet the cut-off score of 85% will be chosen for the final judging.

Final Image Model candidates and their Lucky Searchers (if any) will be notified by registered mail. They must confirm their participation on or before May 24, 2002.

The Lucky Searchers will have to show their registered mail and present a valid ID on the screening date.

Final Screening:
The 10 official candidates will undergo VTR and photo sessions on May 31, 2002 at Horizon Edsa Hotel. Judges will determine the official HDP Image Models.

Criteria for final screening:
Personality - 50%
Beauty (Appeal for Males) - 40%
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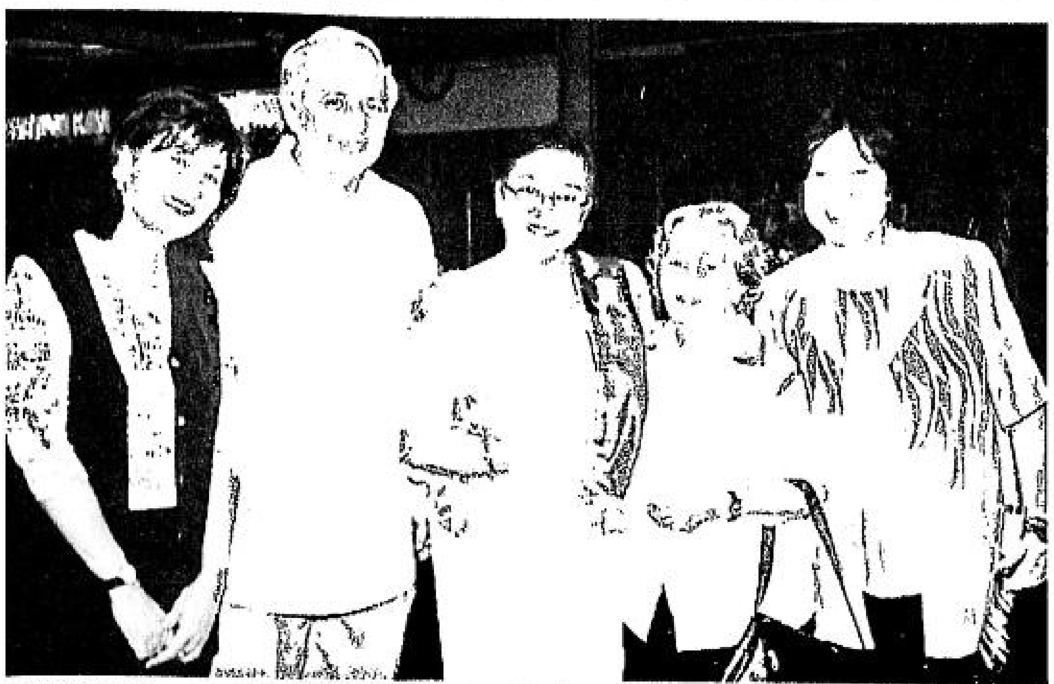


ARACELI Limcaco Dans (in *patadyong*) with Queenie Mills, Bimbo Mills, Araceli Dans, Isabel Torre (Nestor Torre's mother) and Jean Lim

Dans wows patrons with trademark 'calado'

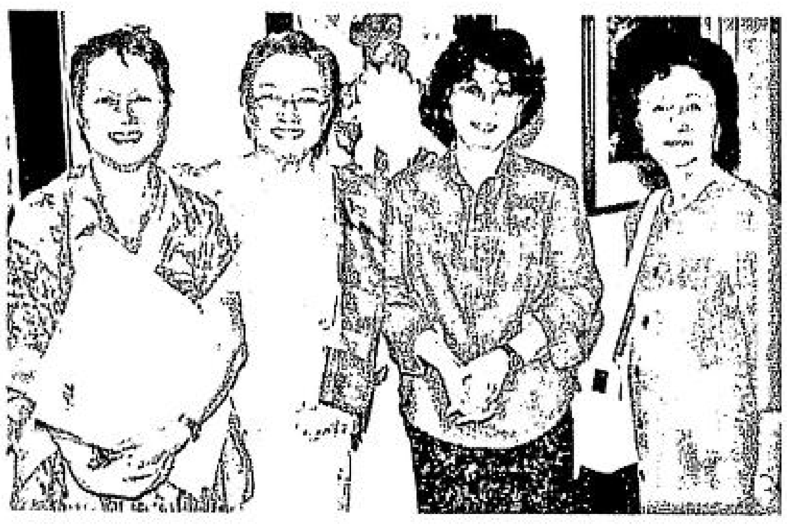
ARACELI Limcaco Dans' *calado* exhibits's opening exceeded beyond all expectations. The traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony was replaced with children from the Bridges Foundation dressed in Filipino attire. They marched from opposite sides of the gallery with lit Christmas lanterns and hung them on bamboo poles.

Surprising all guests and passersby was Regine Velasquez, accompanied by flute player Jay Gomez and guitarist J.C. Uy, with an impromptu rendition of "Ugoy ng Bayan."

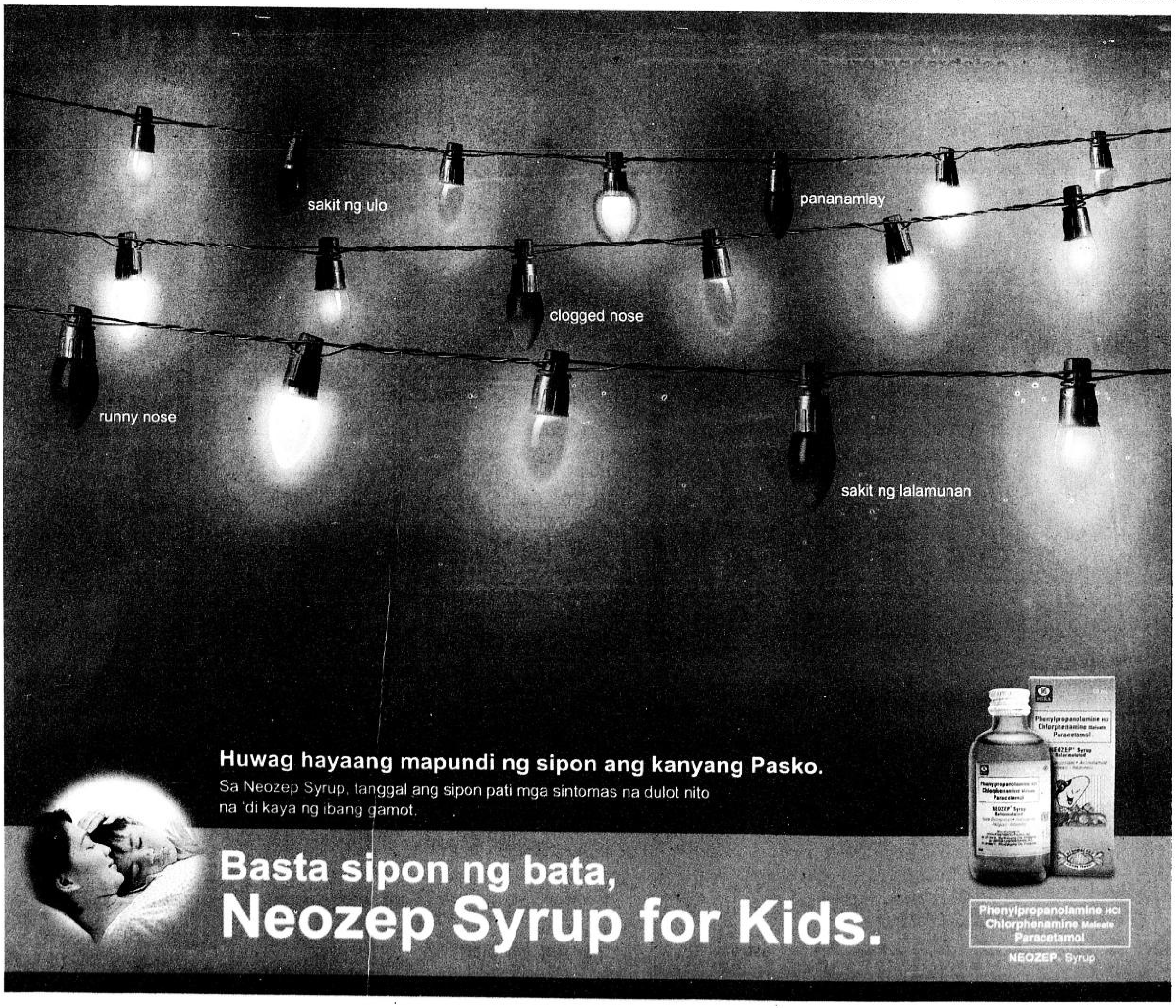
Luminaries from the world of visual arts, theater, entertainment, literati, the academe as well as art lovers and art collectors attended the touching inaugural.

Among the guests were Araceli's brother Msgr. Fidelis Limcaco, Tipin Eleazar, Phyllis Zaballero, Teresita Duldulao, Raul Isidro, Joven Ignacio, Azor Pazcoguin, Angelito and Manuel Baldemor,

DANS/ p.D3



GILDA Cordero Fernando, the visual artist, Araceli Limcaco Dans, Rosalinda Dator Yusi and Letizia Roxas Constantino



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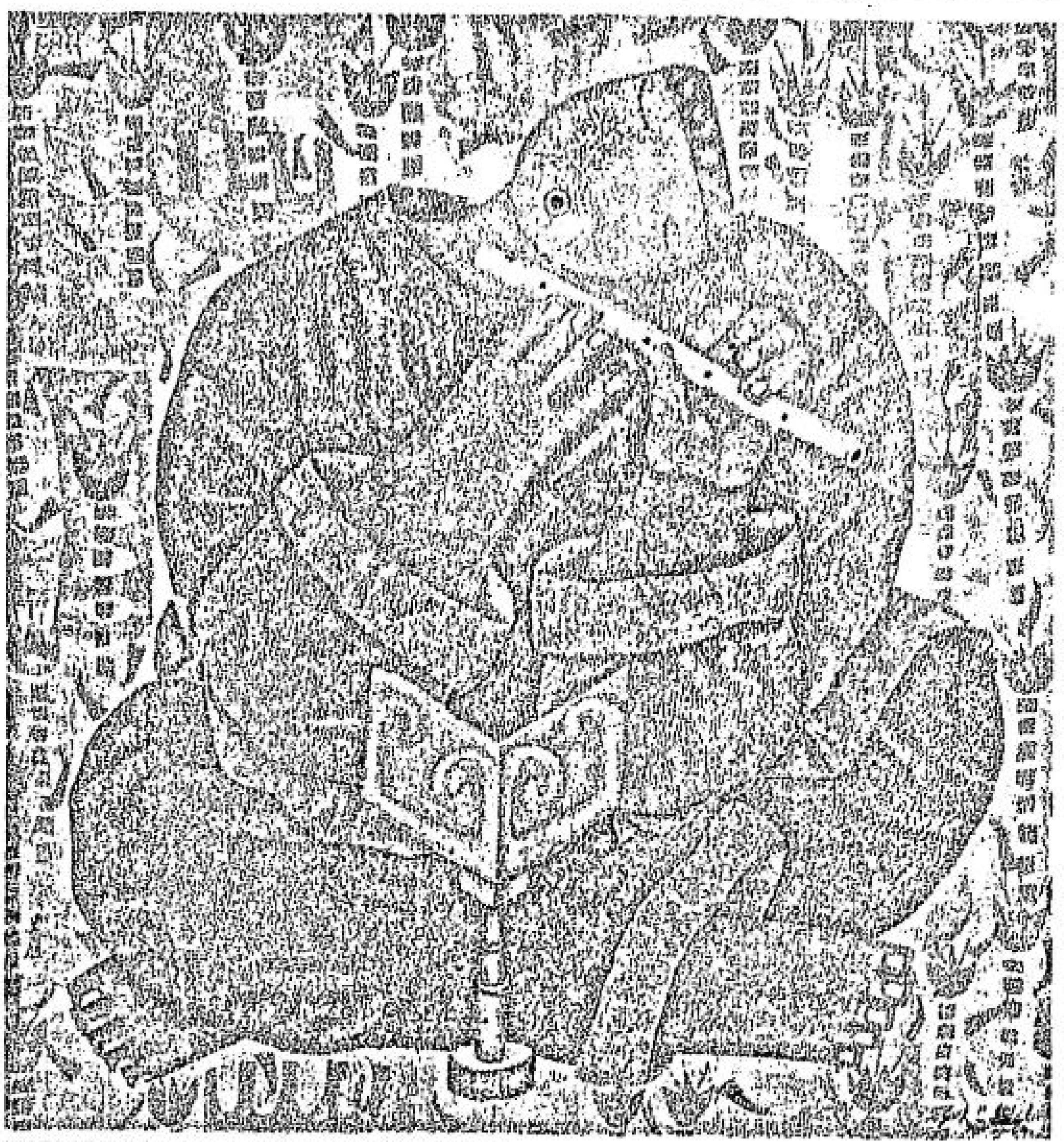

"MEDITATION in Blue," acrylic on canvas

Beauty in a grain of color by Jack Salud

JACK Salud

POINTILLIST artist Jack Salud is holding his 10th solo exhibit dubbed "Meditations" until Dec. 24 at the Gallery 139 (4/L SM Megamall Building A, Mandaluyong City).

A recipient of the prestigious commission to design the Ayala Museums Christmas Card in 1998, Salud will showcase his latest eight-piece collection in acrylic on 12"x16" canvas, filtered with dexterity by the artist's carefully shaded "pointillist" technique made famous by French Romanticist George Seurat.

Salud believes that the rough granular treatment is not only appealing but deeply satisfying to both the viewer and the painter.

Dans wows patrons . . .

(From page D2)

Teresita Duldulao, Raul Isidro, Lina de Joya, Felipe Mayoya, Tito Sanchez, Aladin Antiqueno, Rosalinda Yusi, Fides Asencio, Bambina Buenaventura, Bobbet Escudero, Luchi Reyes, Rene and Imelda Isidoro, Tony Galang, Salud Evangelista, Gilda Cordero Fernando, Letizia Constantino, Jim Paredes, Cora and Ting Jayme, Georgie Querumbim, Tante and Sylvia Ventura, Elena S.J. Fernando, Prof. Zosima Lee, Drs. Rey and Ronnie Estrella, Peping and Tina Bonifacio, Tony Herrera, Doy Rosete, Joey Tanedo, Armando Andaya and daughter Christine, and many others.

The exhibit will run until Dec. 20 at the Metropolitan Art Gallery, 4/L SM Megamall.

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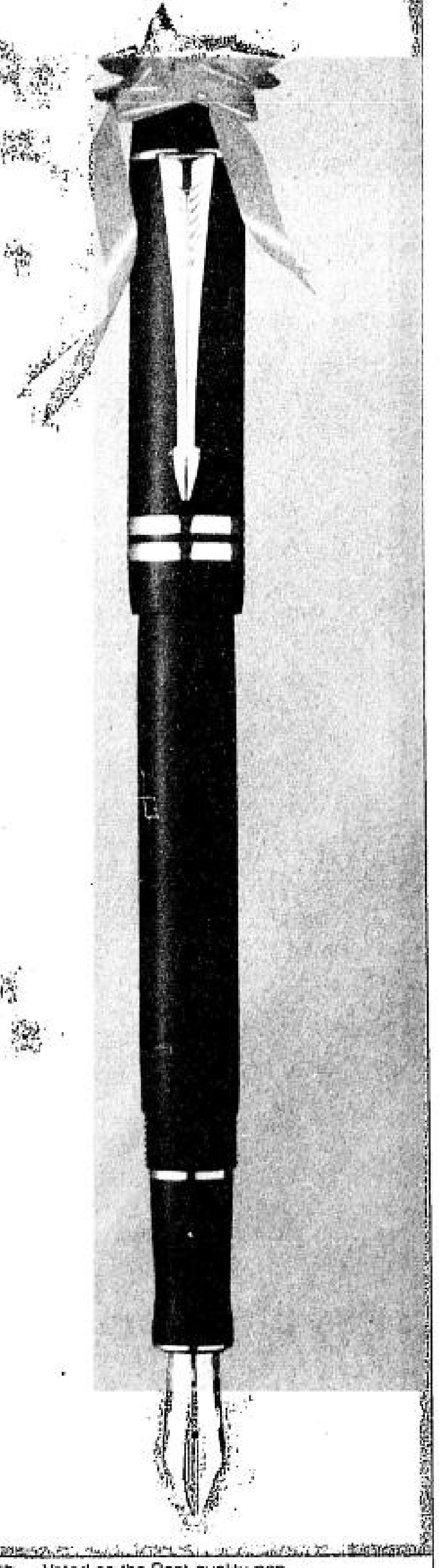

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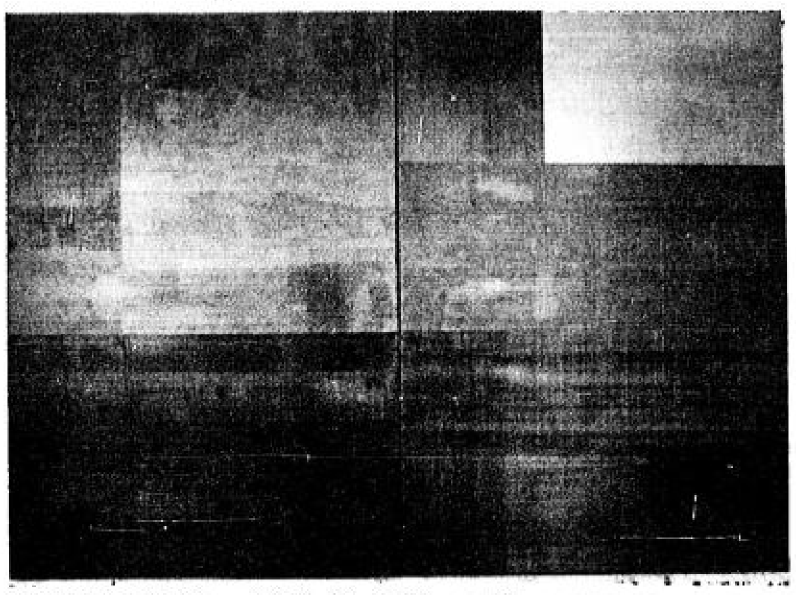
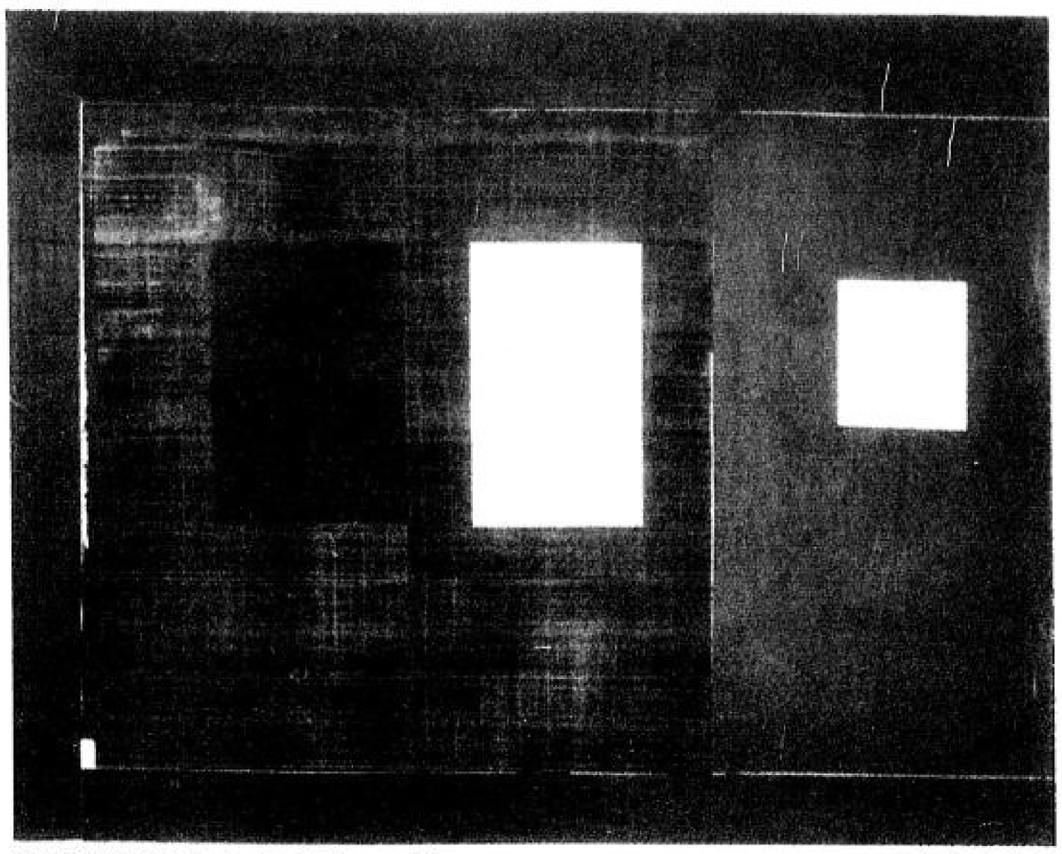
Experimenting with colors and tools, even cake decoration tools, the abstractionist explores 'shades of the metal age' with some intriguing, provocative results



"AMANECER (Dawn)," 7'x10', 2001, acrylic on canvas



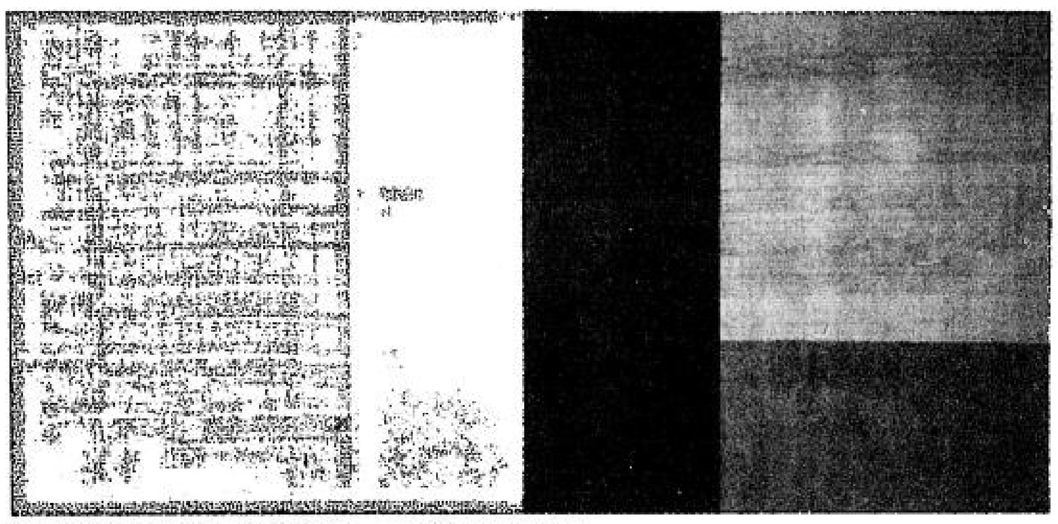
"BLACKLIGHT," 5'x6', 2001, acrylic on canvas

The cake in Carating's abstracts

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

AMONG THE CROP of young budding artists who burst into the art scene in the '70s, Norberto (Lito) Carating has today become one of the leading abstractionists of his generation.

He has over the years produced art that, by virtue of its consistency and uncompromising standards, is among the most substantial body of works by any artist today. From his earlier "*lamanlupa*" and Anilao series to his more recent flamboyant display of colors, Carating has never failed to engage the mind and the senses, an intrepid disciple of the new abstractionism that defies time-tested norms.



"DAPIT-HAPON," 4'x8', 2001, acrylic on canvas

In his eighth solo exhibition at Budji Gallery (233 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air, Makati), Carating has 17 large-scale paintings all done in his trademark medium, acrylic. The sheer size of his new works is daunting enough (the biggest measures 7x10 ft and the smallest is 5x6 ft), but the spacious interiors of Budji Layug's showroom, with its high-ceiling living areas, is up to the task. But this is, again, another unmistakable Carating trademark: he literally goes to town with an abundant supply of paint and takes on the largest space imaginable.

Exploration

These works explore a wide range of colors that Carating, himself a vaunted colorist, has of late been obsessed with, which he collectively calls "shades of the metal age," an allusion to the resurgence of the metallic elements he concocted years ago while in the act of mixing paint, matching hues for his desired effects, and giving full vent to his iconoclastic pursuit of color. Thankfully, the result, as the collection readily attests, has never been more gratifying, both visually and emotionally.

The basic image is a grid, or rather a field of grids, which in the vast expanse of the canvas, yields a landscape of moods, or mental states, mostly dependent on the color that dominates. Carating has, to be sure, arduously worked on the correlation between time and place, conjuring moments that have been stored in memory, and which presumably are casually linked up with corresponding places and destinations.

There are, for instance, allusions to his Spanish sojourn a year ago, where, along with other leading Filipino abstract painters such as Gus Albor, Lao Lianben, Allan and Ivi Cosio, he toured and exhibited in major cities. Thus, "Noche Estrellada" has been inspired mainly by the starry nights of those treks in the Iberian countryside. Also, the series titled "Puesta del Sol" (literally "sunset") captures the dominant hues of sunset in the act of remembering those magical moments he shared with fellow artists.

The colors in the grid have been achieved by frenzied layering, which takes up about four stages, depending, of course, on the time and weather.

Textual highlights

Carating, for textural highlights, has discovered the wonders of cake decoration tools, which he had custom-made for his own pur-

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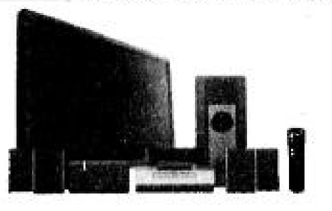


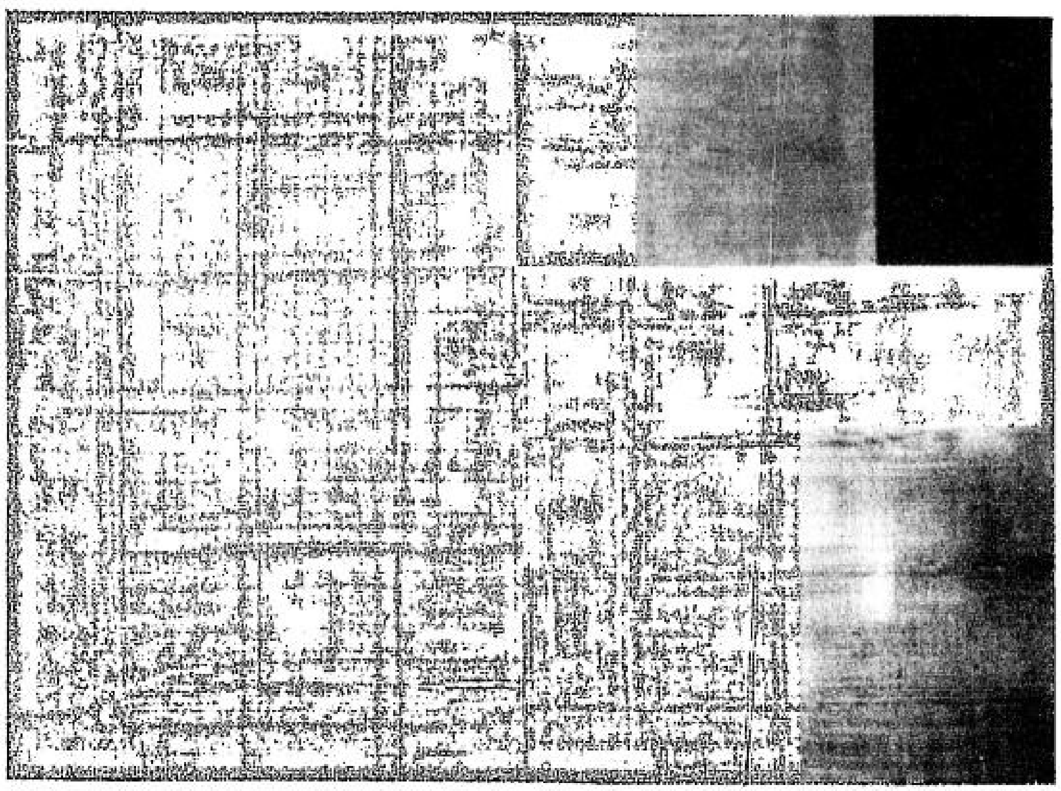
pose, as being principally instrumental in the movement created by those swirling, undulating lines that resemble the effects of incision.

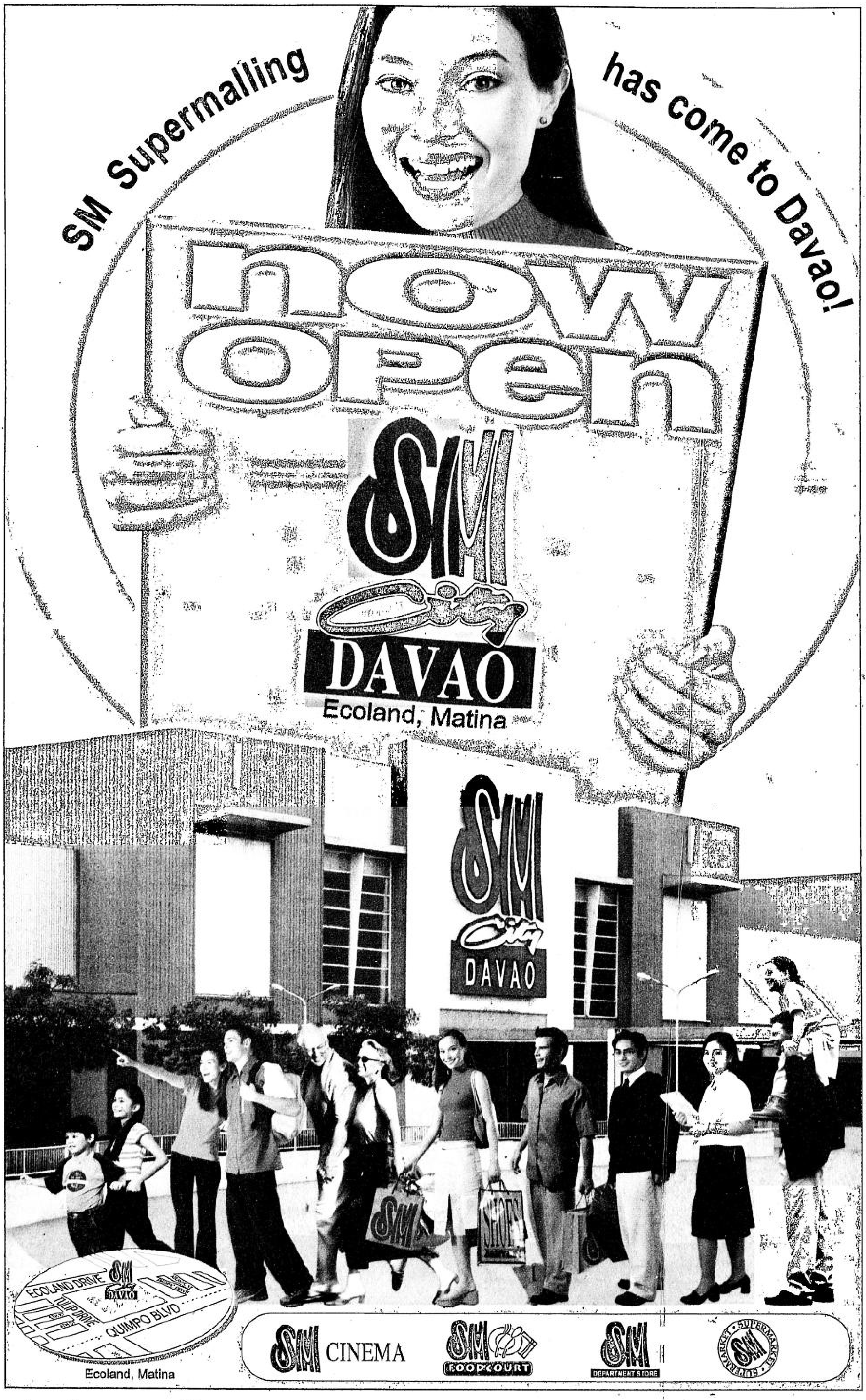
Later in the creative process, the artist is yet to let loose his primal colors on the canvases, alternating between cadmium orange to cobalt blue and pthalo green, ensuring the counterpoint created by the interplay of vertical and horizontal lines, the stark contrast between light and shadow, the overall harmony achieved from combining the calculated and the spontaneous movements.

There, too, are the most unlikely colors in "Metallic Mist," which Carating started exploring after his brief visit to Spain. The same color scheme dominates in "Luz de Luna," which literally means "moonlight," save for a window on the upper right hand corner with brown and black squares.

In more ways than one, Carating's new works reveal the never-ending possibilities that this free spirit can conjure. By working in his own quiet way, without the fuss and fanfare that characterize the art world today, Carating has distilled his art to full maturity, creating a world of magical moments that we can share in, with the rare pleasures that magic brings.

LITO Carating, the intrepid


"**LUZ** de Luna," 5'x6', 2001, acrylic on canvas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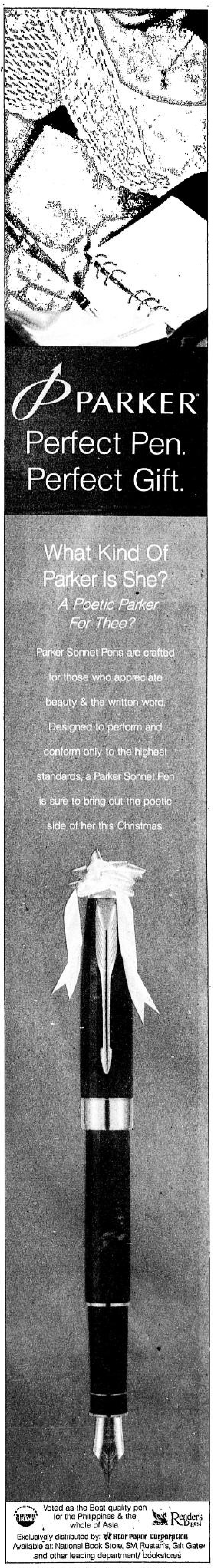
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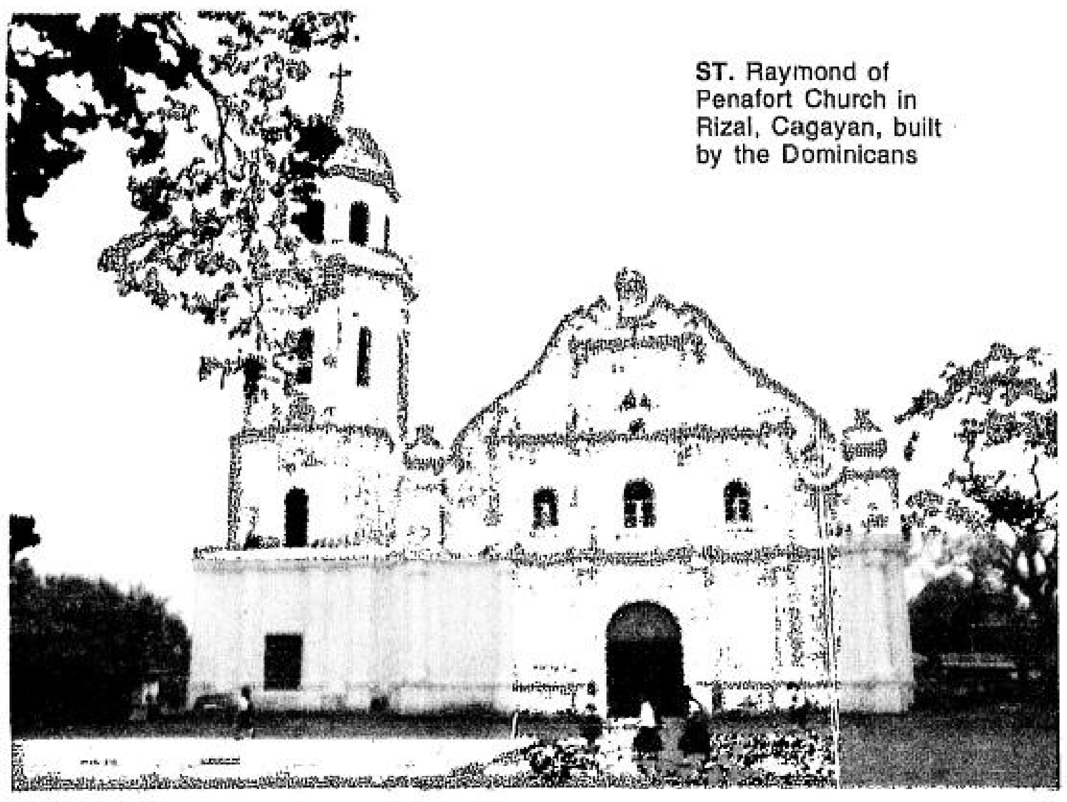
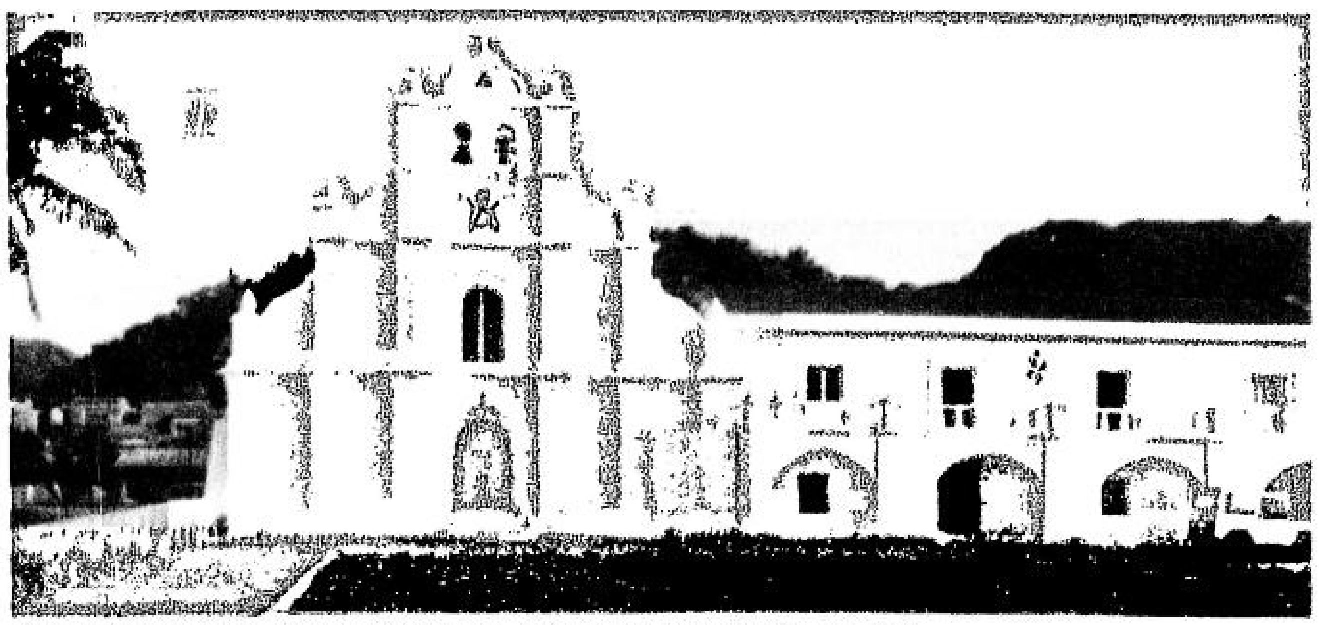


ST. Raymond of Penafort Church in Rizal, Cagayan, built by the Dominicans



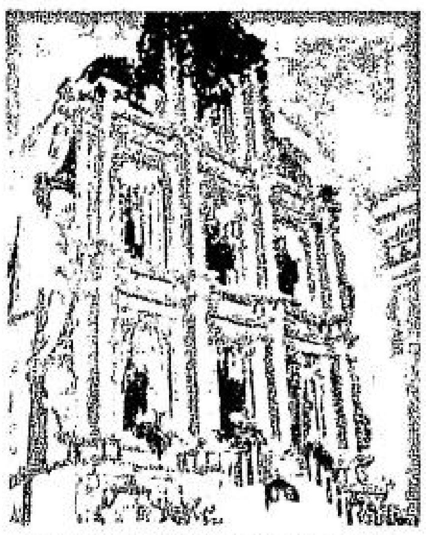
SAN Carlos Borromeo Church in Mahatao, Batanes, built by the Dominicans

NCCA lists ancient churches for restoration

(From page D1)

> The broader signal is for everyone, from government authorities to concerned citizens, to consult with the NCCA for technical assistance before attempting to 'restore' the heritage that is in their care

SAN Isidro Labrador Church in Tanay, Rizal



INTRICATELY crafted *retablo* of the Church of Sta. Monica

nation. The four churches inscribed in the Unesco World Heritage List are not included. Sites are listed alphabetically by order of location. Selection criteria and a list of the first group of churches were published Nov. 19. The list continues with descriptions by José:

13. Mahatao, Batanes: Parish church of San Carlos Borromeo, built in the 19th-century by the Dominicans. A stone structure in the courtyard was formerly the *beaterio*, a local institution that assisted in the work of the church. Elsewhere in the churchyard are stone monuments used perhaps as guiding lights for fishermen. The entire site radiates with an almost folk-architecture quality that reflects the simplicity of missionary life in the remote Batanes islands.

14. Magsingal, Ilocos Sur: Parish church of San Guillermo de Aquitania, built in the 18th to 19th centuries by the Augustinians. The site includes the ruined walls and intact bell tower of an earlier church, said to be destroyed by Diego Silang. The ruins also include the 19th-century church and *convento*, and a brick school. Characteristic of many Ilocos churches, steep buttresses support the structure. The interior has a well-conserved *retablo* and pulpit, arguably the most important examples of Baroque-influenced art in the Ilocos. Commencing from the church and linking various streets are 14 stone shrines of the Via Crucis.

15. Majayjay, Laguna: Parish church of San Gregorio Magno, built in the early 18th century by the Franciscans. The huge church commands a view of the hilly town and Laguna de Bay. The interior with its *retablos* and *azulejo*-tiled floor is fairly well preserved despite some alterations on the walls. Access to the bell tower has been made easier with concrete steps that also lead to the *langit-langitan*, the catwalk above the ceiling that leads to the crossing over the transept (an architectural feature not easily observable in other churches). The *convento* is one of the earliest surviving examples in the country. It was slightly defaced when part of it was converted into a school. The churchyard and back of the church have also been defaced.

16. Maragondon, Cavite: Parish church of the Assumption of Our Lady, built in the early 18th century by the Jesuits, with later additions by the Seculars and the Augustinian Recollects. The best-preserved church complex in Cavite, despite some additions. Much of the church and bell tower, and the lower portion of the *convento*, is made of irregular river stones, indicative of the early level of technology at the time of construction. The intricately carved *retablos*, pulpit and church doors (with galleons and floral designs) date to the Jesuits times. The Seculars installed the huge beams crossing the nave. The unusual horseshoe-shaped communion rail, with flooring of inlaid wood in various colors, recalls the San Sebastian Church in Manila, also a Recollect construction.

17. Masinloc, Zambales: Parish church of San Andres. Built in the 18th-19th centuries by the Augustinian Recollects. This is the best example of a colonial church complex in the province, although extensively hit by a recent earthquake. The doorway from the choir loft is carved and polychromed; it is the most unique feature of the church after the facade.

18. Pan-ay, Capiz: Parish church of Santa Monica, built in the 18th-19th centuries by the Augustinians. With its several *retablos* and other decorations, this is the best-preserved church interior in Panay Island. Presently, the roof is in danger of collapse. Church treasures have been transferred to an adjacent museum. The biggest bell in the country is found in the Panay bell tower.

19. Romblon, Romblon: Cathedral of San José, built in the 18th-19th centuries by the Augustinian Recollects. Although some alterations have been made, this remains the best preserved church complex in the province with several *retablos* inspired by the Baroque style.

20. Rizal (formerly Malaueg), Cagayan: Parish church of San Raymundo de Peñafort, built in the 1600s by

NCCA/ p.D7

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NCCA lists ancient churches for restoration

(From page D6)

the Dominicans in the foothills of the Cordilleras. The site was an important mission to the people who inhabited what is know the Apayao area. As in Maragondon, the rough stonework belies the early technology at the time of construction. The *retablo* is a composite of parts from earlier altarpieces done in the Baroque style. Shards of blue-and-white porcelain abound all over the church grounds.

21. San Joaquin, Iloilo: Parish church of San Joaquin, built in the 19th century by the Augustinians. The carved pediment (triangular area at the top portion of the façade) of the church, a folk depiction of the Spanish victory over the Moors at Tetuan, is second only to that of the nearby Miag-ao church (a Unesco World Heritage site). The three *retablos* of carved limestone have lost their polychroming. Unique in the sprawling ruins of the *convento* are an oval well and a kiln for baking bread. The church ensemble is magnificently located on a plain that overlooks the sea.

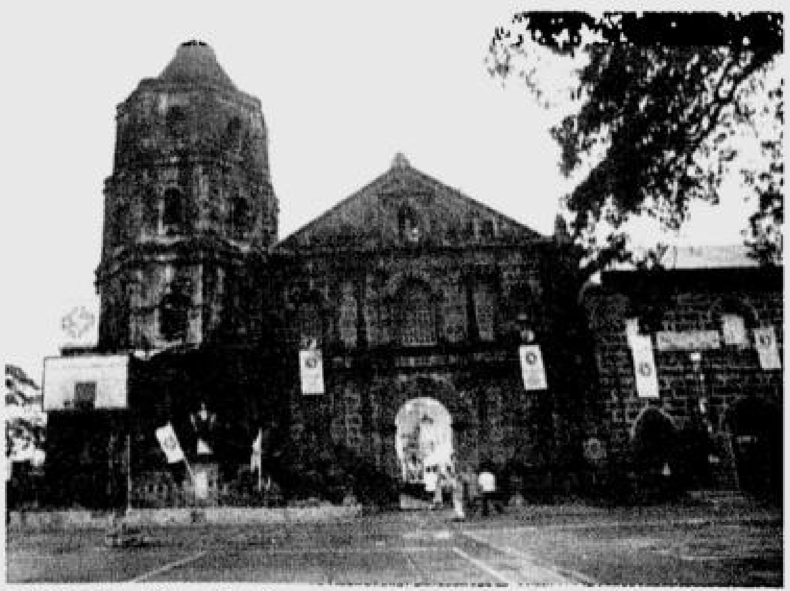
22. Tabaco, Albay: Parish church of San Juan Bautista, built in the 19th century by the secular clergy. The bell tower with *rocaille* (shell-like motifs) elements seem to stylistically date from an earlier time. The church has an unusual floor plan with compartments that remain inexplicable. The stones on the walls bear masons' marks, something rarely seen in the country.

23. Tanay, Rizal: Parish church of San Ildefonso, built in the second half of the 18th century by the Franciscans. This is the best-preserved church complex in Rizal province. Five beautiful *retablos* in a Rococo-influenced style are the main foci of the interior. On the walls are panels of the Via Crucis, celebrated because of the way in which they were indigenized from Western styles through the use of perspective, proportion and other details.

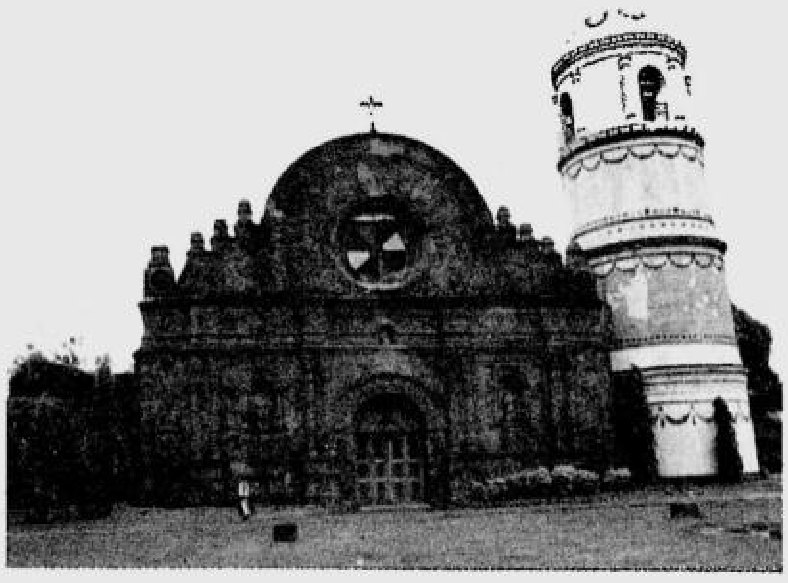
24. Tayabas, Quezon: Basilica of Saint Michael, built in the 18th-19th centuries by the Franciscans. Best preserved and most beautifully decorated church complex in Quezon province. The interior is a good example of the Neo-classic style. Within the town are two other chapels and an ancient cemetery with its own chapel. The town is located in the foothills of Mount Banahaw.

25. Tayum, Abra: Parish church of Santa Catalina de Alejandria, built in the 19th century by the Secular clergy. Originally a mission for the Tinguian tribe, this is the best-preserved church complex in Abra. The *convento*, situated across the street from the church, was first converted into a house for nuns and then into a school. Around the churchyard and continuing into the main streets are 14 small shrines for the Via Crucis. Important examples of early Tinguian art, such as a carved wooden baptismal font, have been transferred to the bishop's residence in Bangued.

26. Tumauini, Isabela: Parish church of San Matias, built in the 1780s by the Dominicans. This is the best-preserved church ensemble in Isabela although its *convento* is in ruins. The church can be considered to be the best and most artistic brick structure in the Philippines. The delicate brickwork is evident in the church itself and also in the cylindrical, confectionery-like bell tower (a later addition). In the *convento*'s vaulted ceiling may still be seen impressions of the mats that were used as forms to mold wet plaster during construction. A low, undulating brick wall circumscribes the front garden.



CHURCH of Sta. Catalina de Alexandria in Tayum, Abra



SAN Matias Church in Tumauini, Isabela, built by the Dominicans, is the most artistic brick structure in the Philippines.

The 26 structures go beyond being testimonies to Filipino faith. They also are architectural records that document different phases in the evolution of Philippine architecture. These structures, standing as they do in the center of cities and towns, are historical records as well, with each church having its own story to tell.

The NCCA project is a first in Philippine conservation. It finally recognizes the need for scientific conservation of our national heritage. It further signals that the clergy and parishioners should consult the NCCA for advice and assistance before any work is done on their churches, whether or not it is one of the 26 churches on the NCCA list. The broader signal is for everyone, from government authorities to concerned citizens to consult with the NCCA for technical assistance before attempting to "restore" the heritage that is in their care.

The 26 churches have been declared by the National Museum as National Treasures.

Contact the Monuments and Sites Committee of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts at the NCCA Building, General Luna Street in Intramuros, Manila; tel. 527-2197, fax 527-2194.

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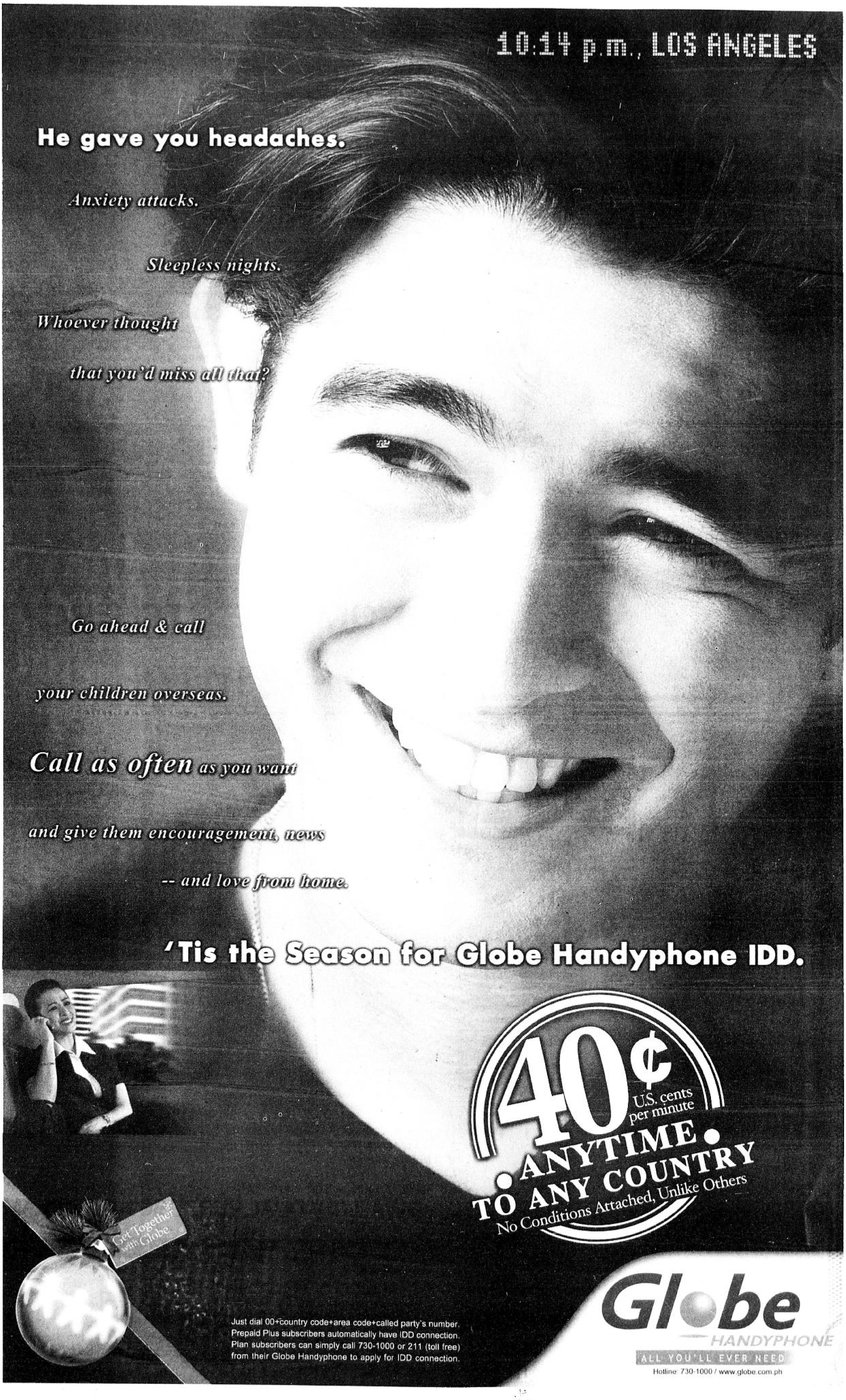

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A better Cinemanila this year

By Constantino C. Tejero

TIKOY Aguiluz has finally found a home for his filmfest, and a permanent time of year for screening this authentic festival of world cinema.

We were a bit apprehensive when July and August came and went without any Cinemanila International Film Festival, as it was at about that time then when the filmfest was being held. Then we were pleasantly surprised to learn it had been scheduled Dec. 7-16 at the Glorietta and Greenbelt cinemas, which would be its main screening venues from now on.

The recently concluded annual filmfest must be a relative success on this third attempt, judging on the support it got from government and the media, the enthusiasm of film enthusiasts flocking to its many screenings, and the quality of the films selected for its program. Festival director Aguiluz must be reaping the good karma for his efforts to bring high-grade films over to these shores.

We've heard of the horror stories about how he struggled to keep this filmfest intact in the past three years. We can only hope that things have finally simmered gently to a nice brew, so we can now sit back and truly enjoy the serving.

Well-selected

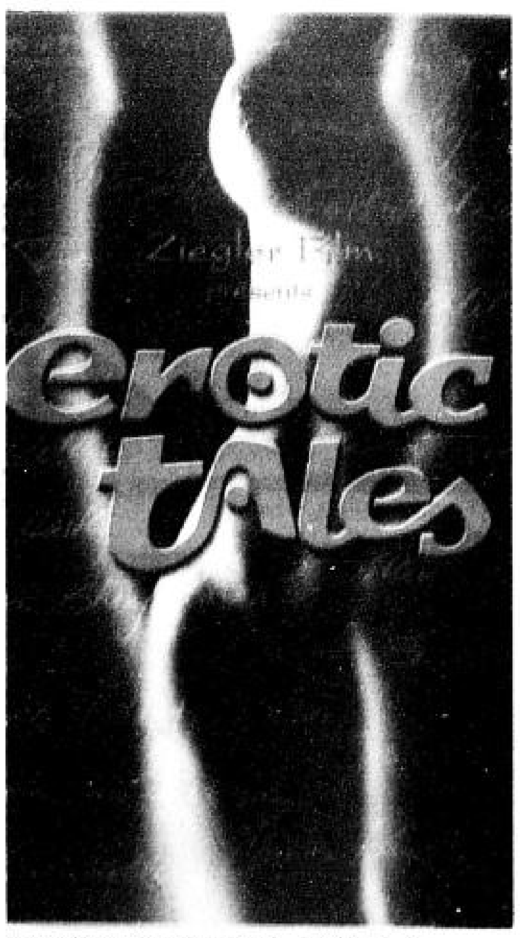
But serving up such a rich brew can prove to be its own poison. Imagine having to choose which to see among "Bob le Flambeur," "Pagdating sa Dulo" and "Jan Dara" or some such films being screened all at once. And you have to shuttle between Greenbelt and the Glorietta yet.

Not only that, on the first week of the festival, a mini filmfest to commemorate Human-Rights Day was held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Among the gems shown were Brocka's "Orapronobis," the Iranian "Children of Heaven," the Macedonian "Before the Rain" (1994 Golden Lion winner in Venice) and Mathieu Kassovitz's "La Haine" (1995 winner for Best Director at Cannes).

As if that wasn't enough, on the second week of Cinemanila, Instituto Cervantes in Malate screened Tomas Gutierrez Alea's "Memories of Underdevelopment" while Cinemagic at Robinsons Place in Ermita screened the Iranian "Choori."

So you can imagine how these overlapping schedules made a mess of our appointments, not to mention the inclement weather and the traffic

A BETTER / p.E4



"EROTIC Tales" series: A tribute to Regine Zeigler

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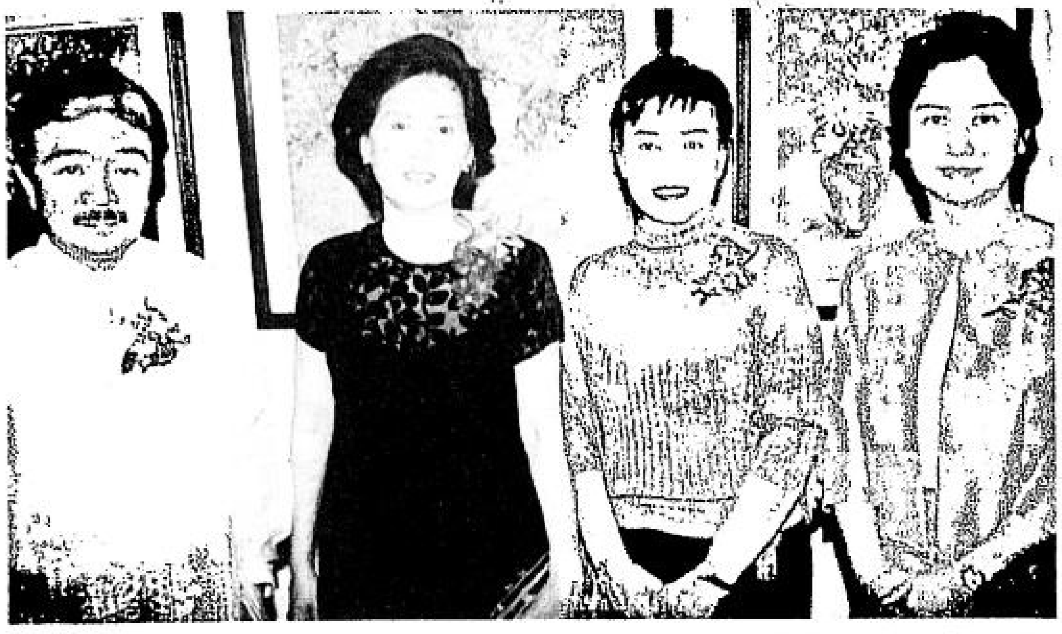
Barrioquinto at Big & Small, Nuyda at Le Soufflé



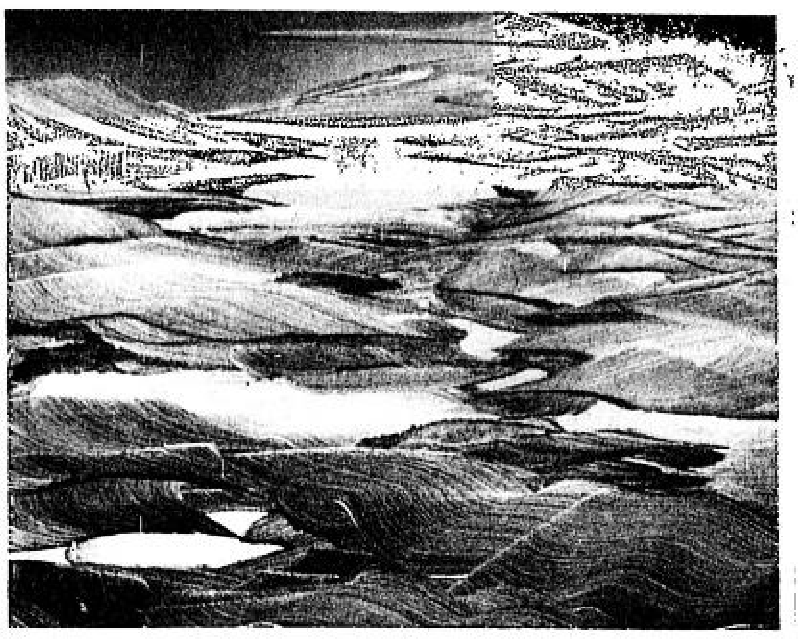
PAINTER Anayap held her first one-woman show at the Asia Art Gallery of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall. From left, Jaime Lim, the painter, Nenita Chan and Julie Uy

VISUAL ARTS

ANDRES Barrioquinto probes into quiet places in his latest one-man show, "My Love Gone Wrong Song," at the new Big & Small Art Co. (4/L SM Megamall Building A, Mandaluyong City) until Dec. 18. A painting graduate of the College of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Santo Tomas, Barrioquinto draws disturbing, dark figures. His talent has been recognized by the Art Association of the Philippines, Metrobank, PLDT and Nokia. He is the first Filipino to win at the International Biennial Print and Drawing Exhibition in Taipeh. Call 371-8886/8887 and 373-0766.

NUYDA AT LE SOUFFLÉ. Justin Nuyda presents his recent works at the Le Soufflé Restaurant-Wine Bar at The Fort. Held with Galleria Duemila, the show presents the artist's interior landscapes while showing glimpses of the Tagaytay Highlands. Call 887-5108 or 831-9990.

DREO AT LIONGOREN. Norman Dreo's exhibit, "Warranty Void If Removed: Recent Works," runs until Dec. 23 at the Liongoren Gallery (111 New York and Stanford Sts., Cubao, QC). Call 912-4319/4640.



"GLIMPSES of Tagaytay Highlands 3," oil, by Justin Nuyda at Le Soufflé

SECUYA IN DAVAO. Victor Secuya holds his 17th one-man show, "Gestures of Love," at Gallery 5 (JS Gaisano Citimall, Ilustre Street, Davao City). The exhibit featuring his recent works on paper runs until Jan. 8.

AT AUSTRALIAN CENTRE. Australian artist Merrick Belyea presents his perceptions of "Life Before Death" until Jan. 11 at the Australia Centre (104 Paseo de Roxas corner Perea Street, Makati City). Call 754-6135 or 893-0807.

GRECO AT NEMIRANDA ARTHOUSE. Paul Greco holds his second one-man show, "Nude Impressionism," at the Nemiranda Arthouse (4/F SM Megamall Building A, Mandaluyong City) until Dec. 19.

AT BOSTON. "Alay 5," a group exhibit featuring Boston Gallery's artists, is on view until Jan 11 at the Boston Gallery (72 Boston St., Cubao, QC). Call 722-9205.

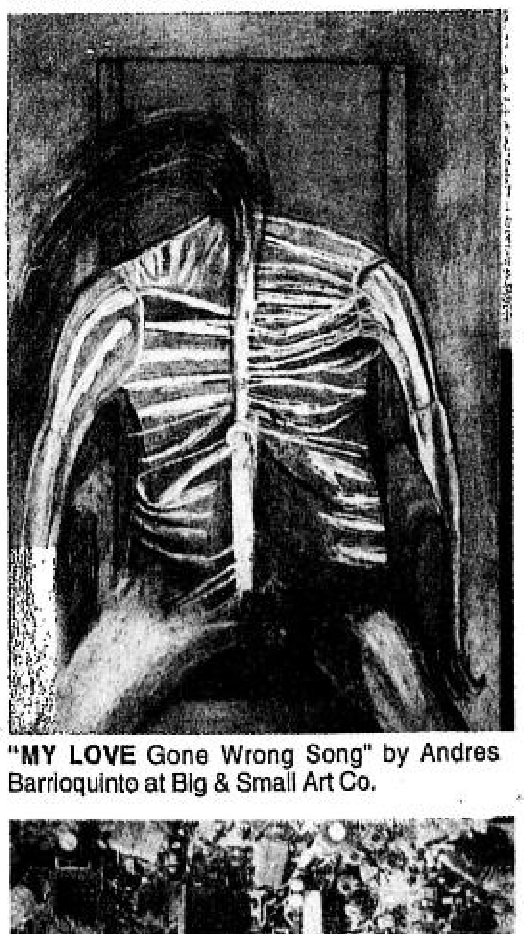
INTERACTIVE ART IN DAVAO. Boboy Buenaventura, Boboy Espinosa, Rene Jerreos and Fred Ferolino is holding "Pinoy Tekniks," a stylized description of their interaction with nature. The show runs until Dec. 18 at the Filtech Arts School (Candelaria Building on Acacia Street and J.P. Laurel Avenue in Bajada, Davao City).

AT CRIMSON. Al Perez, Danny Pangan, Cris Velasco, Joey Angeles, Ernie Velasquez, Rey Salamat and Jess Santos mount an exhibit until Dec. 22 at Crimson Gallery (136 Katipunan Road St., White Plains, QC).

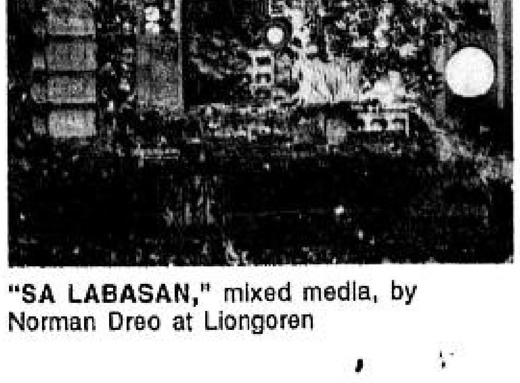
SODUSTA AT ELKS CLUB. Environmental artist Toto Sodusta's 25th one-man exhibit, "Samu't-Sari Isang Anyo," at ELKS Club (Corinthian Plaza, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City), showcases different subjects—genre, landscape, garden, ancestral houses, underwater scenes and others. The exhibit runs until Dec. 21. Call 235-6222 or 811-3173.

DOCTOR-PAINTERS IN LIPA SHOW. A group of Lipa-based doctor-painters is holding a show at Mary Mediatrix Medical Center, Lipa City. Participants are Ces Angelia, Agnes Lara, Lin Vivas, May Mendoza-Gaw, Loi Songco, Angie Acosta, Zaldy Panopio; and workshoppers Mark Manguera, Aileen Acosta, Jem Martinez, Gemma Canlapan and Benny Marzan. The exhibit runs until Dec. 21.

CHRISTMAS ART AT DBP. The Development Bank of the Philippines is holding "Larawan ng Pasko" at the Ugnayan Hall of its Makati City head office. The show focuses on Christmas themes such as the Madonna and Child, the *simbang gabi* and the Nativity. It features the works of the Concerned Artists for Nature and Visual Aesthetics Society. The exhibit runs until Dec. 28.



"MY LOVE Gone Wrong Song" by Andres Barrioquinto at Big & Small Art Co.



"SA LABASAN," mixed media, by Norman Dreo at Liongoren

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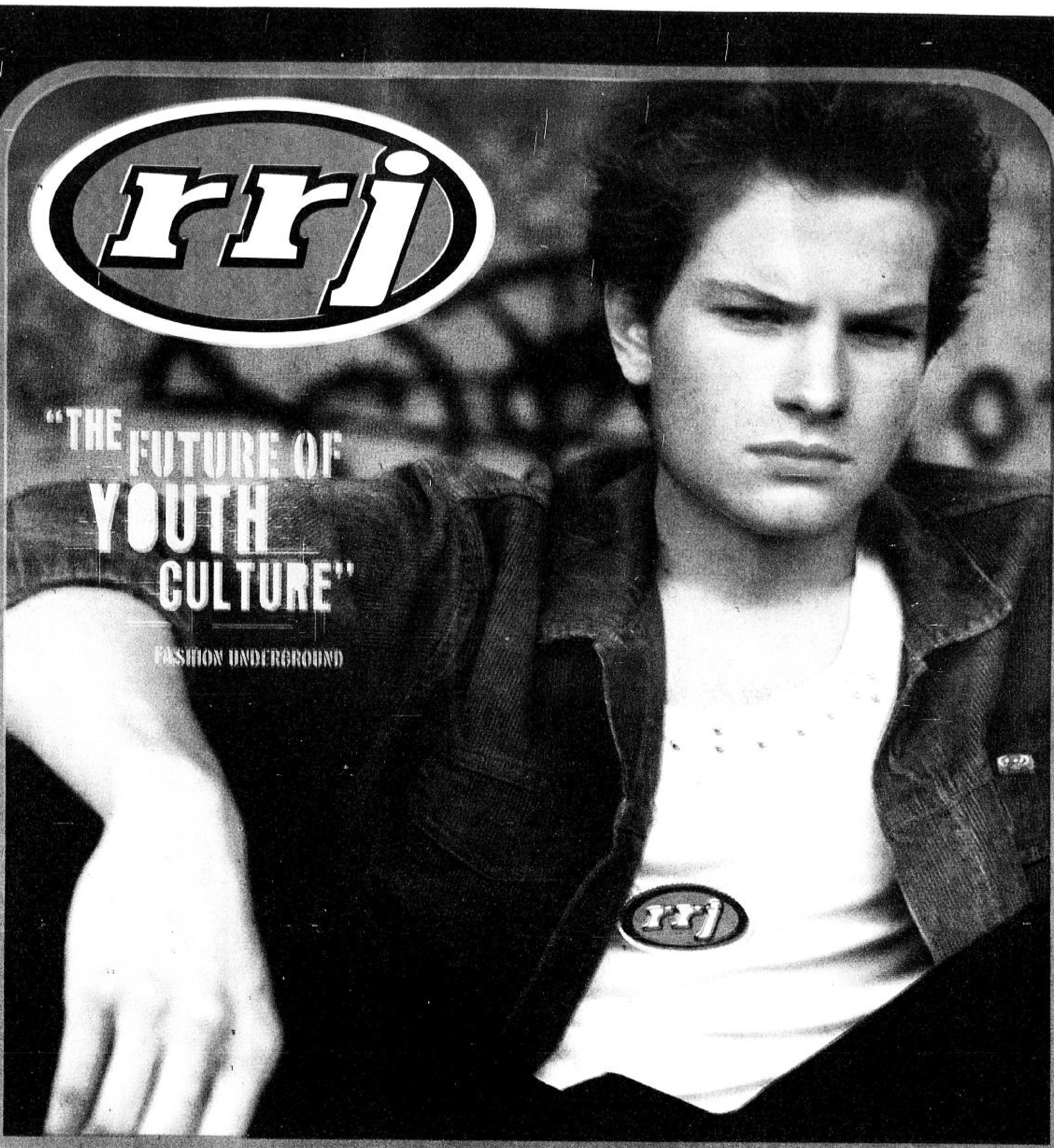
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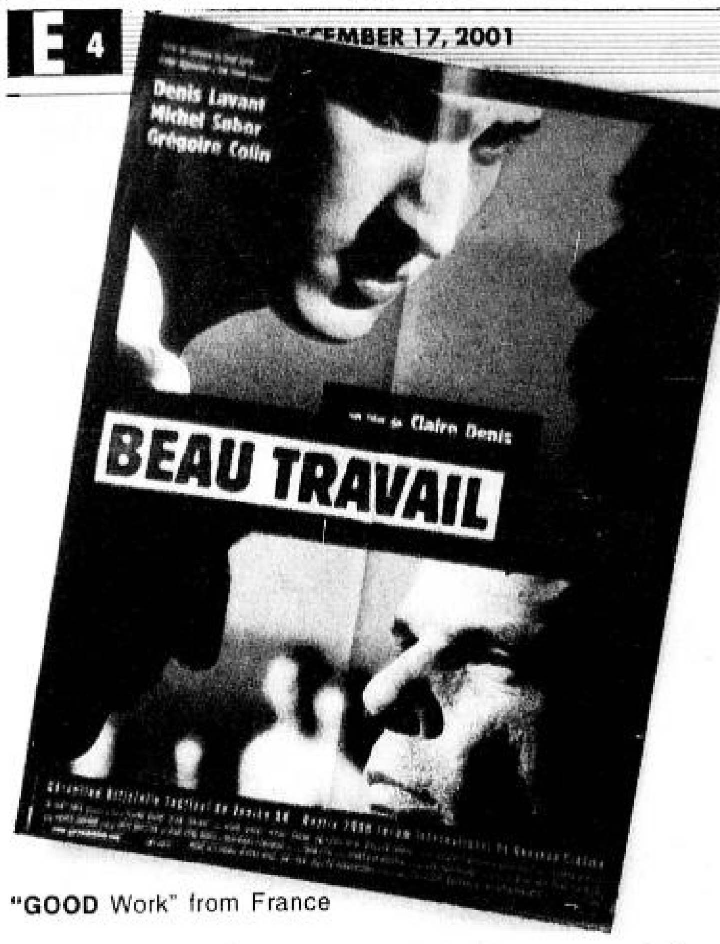


"**GOOD** Work" from France

A better Cinemanila . . .

(From page E1)

constantly at our back. What's a poor film enthusiast to do?

Cinemanila's program of films was well-considered, many of which were excellent. Our only gripe was its scheduling.

Films missed

We could understand if a film's print had not arrived, or the rating of the Movie & Television Review & Classification Board was pending, but festival organizers should have, at least, extended its duration to a few more days.

Relatively small filmfests like Cine Europa, which screens an average of 11 films, runs for an average of 10 days. This year's edition of Cinemanila screened over 70 films, almost 50 of which full-length features, yet it ran for only nine days.

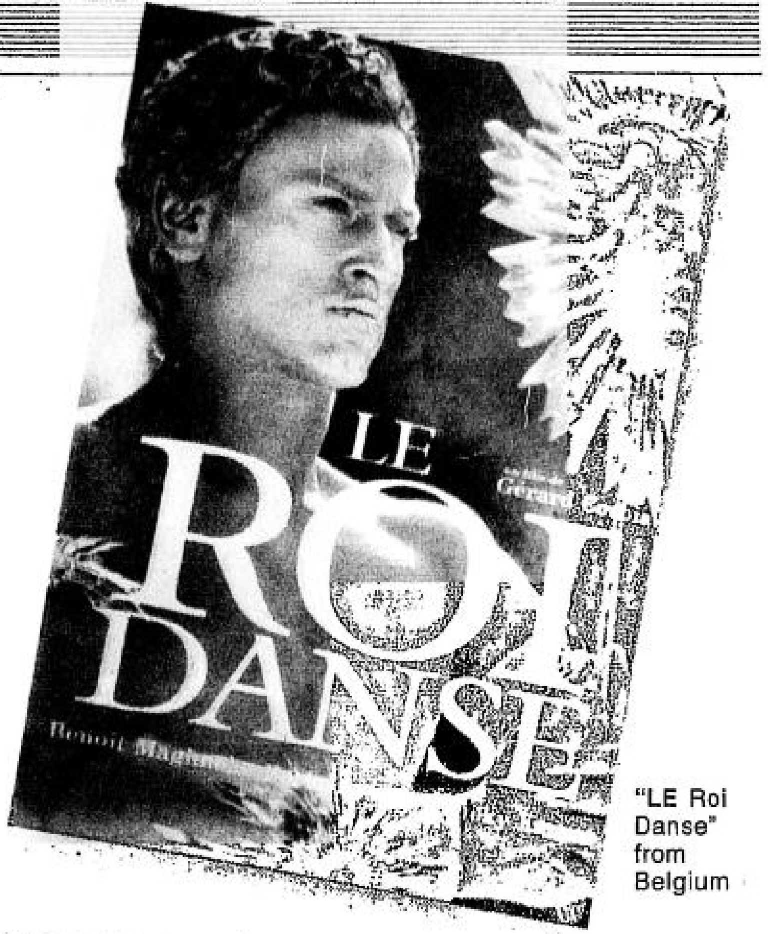
The result? We couldn't have our fill, and we missed many. (We have other lives to live, you know, other appointments to keep, other works to fulfill.)

We saw only about two-thirds of "The Map of Sex and Love," and missed 20 minutes of "Unfinished Song," 30 minutes of "Greedy Guts," 30 minutes of "Spinning Gasing" (Time's best Malaysian in years), an hour of "Under the Sand" (Film Comment's finest French Film of the year) and the entire five hours of "Batang West Side."

And we never saw "No Man's Land," "Barking Dogs Never Bite," "Year of the Quiet Sun," "Divided We Fall," "The Price of Milk," "Kasaba," "This Is My Moon," "Bangkok Dangerous," the Filipino digital films and the "Erotic Tales" of Hal Hartley, Ken Russell, Bob Rafelson, Nicholas Roeg, Rosa von Praunheim.

It was so frustrating. Those were all must-see films, and yet many of them were sreened at 11:40 a.m., when potential moviegoers were either sleeping or eating lunch. But what were we to do?

Well, next year is another year. We swear we'll never...



"LE Roi Danse" from Belgium

Studies focus on the inarticulate, the indigenous

THE ACADEMIC community can find a mine of relevant information with New Day Publishers recently released books that celebrate the rich unexplored Philippine culture. Two are extensive studies on the grass-roots Filipinos or the "inarticulate" mountain tribes of the Cordillera as examined by a Filipino historian and a Japanese anthropologist, respectively.

"A History of the Inarticulate" by Dr. Luis Camara Dery is about genealogy, local history, of ethno-linguistic groups inhabiting the countryside, town formation and the age-old profession of prostitution. Each topic has a particular story, distinct from the rest but inextricably connected with the topics that form the country's rich mosaic past.

In his discourse, the author justifies his efforts to "bring to the public attention the idea that Philippine history is not only the history of leading personalities, of foreign rules in the country nor of metropolitan Manila alone."

He also reexamines the different threads of historical developments that unfolded in the level of local inhabitants—developments that show that the "view from the bottom" assumes a much different perspective compared to those from the perspective of the elite.

The book challenges students of Philippine history to unravel and rewrite the collective past of the Filipinos and to correct the many "erroneous" interpretations found in history books.

Reading "A History of the Inarticulate" is an enriching experience to academicians who share the common objective of uniting the history of the "inarticulate—the silent, unimpressive histories of the many other sectors of the Philippine society."

An award-winning author, Dery has published his works in various national and international journals, earning him prizes like the 1993 Outstanding Book Award of the University of the Philippines President's Committee on Outstanding Publications and the Outstanding Book Award of the National Academy of Science and Technology in 1999.

"Cordillera: Diversity in Culture Change" by Japanese social anthropology Toh Goda is a comparative study of cultures of the most dominant tribes in the Cordillera—the Bontok and Ifugao.

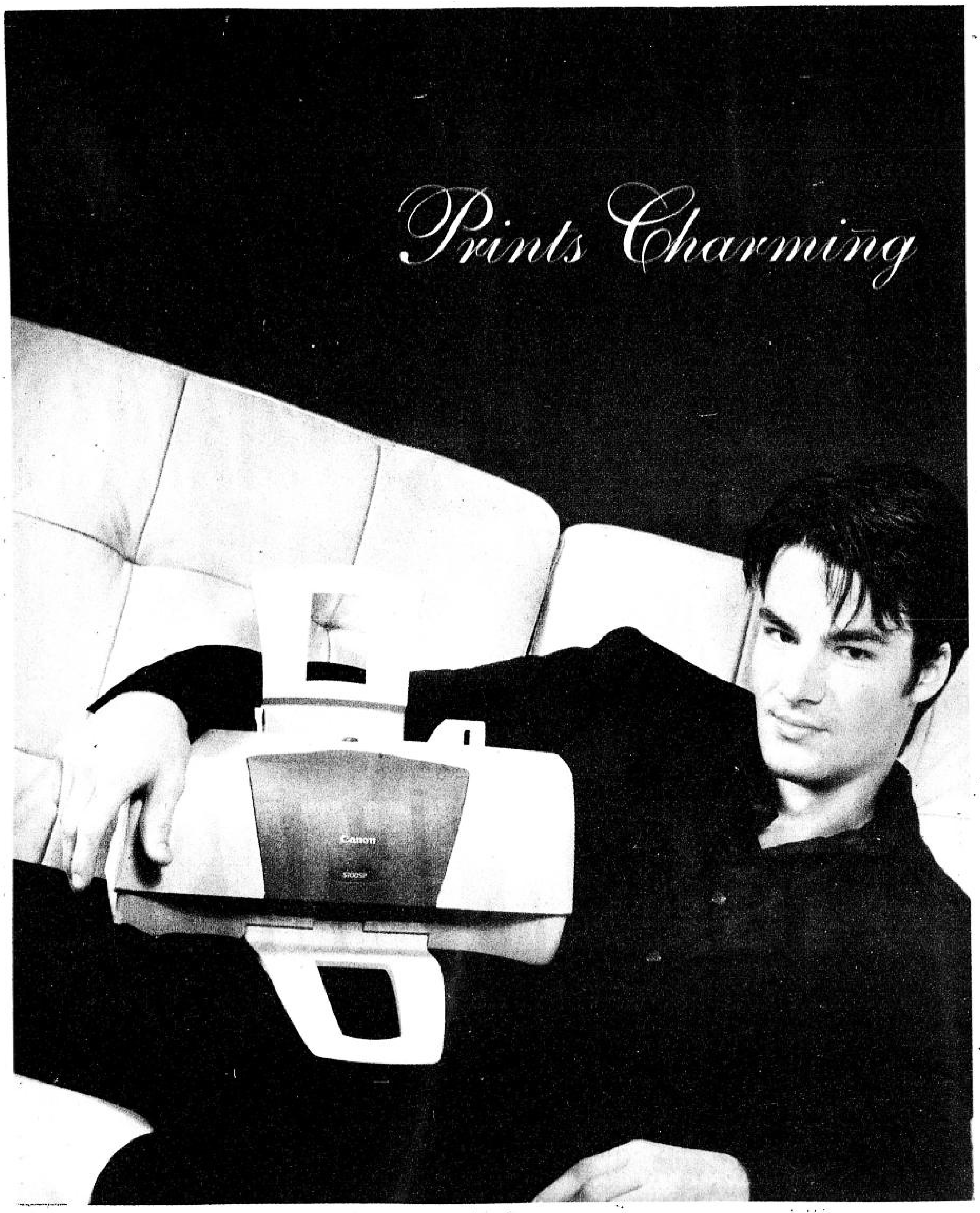
The author comprehensively exhibits the possibility of an alternative theory on culture change. He also notes the effect of acculturation and inculturation of their indigenous way of life because of Spanish and American colonial conquest and constant contact with lowland inhabitants.

A faculty of Cross-cultural Studies in Kobe University, Goda presents a comprehensive profile of the tribes, making him one of the few foreign academicians who have cultivated competence in the discourse on Filipino indigenous culture.

The author was a student at the Department of Anthropology in UP from 1974-1976, on a scholarship grant by the Southeast Asian Scholarship Program of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture while he was a doctorate student at the Graduate School of Social Sciences, Tokyo Metropolitan University. Since then, he has been concentrating his fieldwork on the Cordillera region of the Philippines. He has also authored other books on ethnography.

The books are available at leading bookstores nationwide: Call 928-8046.

CORDILLERA:
DIVERSITY IN CULTURE CHANGE
SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF HILL PEOPLE IN NORTHERN LUZON, PHILIPPINES
TOH GODA



You never forget your first love: childish were its beginnings based on looks alone - albeit conspicuously handsome ones. How quickly it matured, as so many cherished pictures serve to remind. Long considered words were changed and changed again, then printed. Just to be crumpled and started anew. The way, even today, they make you smile - or cry - from their familiar place on the page. How bold they still appear. Life, so colourful, so bright and perfect was revealed to you in a way you'd never imagined. This Canon is terribly stylish, slim and extremely potent; its faithful heart graces you with 5ppm monochrome & 2ppm colour at 720 x360 dpi. You'll never forget your first: the intelligent - the downright sexy - Canon S100SP bubble jet printer.

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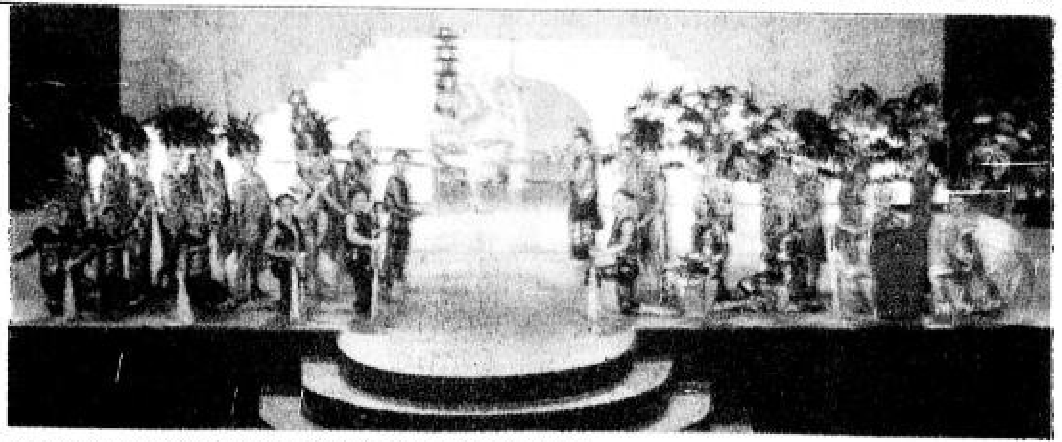
THE 80-PLUS "Amazing" performers bring new life to the Manila Film Center.



SOUTHERN and Northern Philippine traditional dance

Reviving the Manila Film Center

BY LEAH SALTERIO

FOR MORE than a decade now, the Manila Film Center has been idle. What was once a symbol for the artistry of Philippine cinema and a venue for glitz and glamor during the Marcos regime, was reduced to a deserted building that accumulated grime, muck and cobwebs through the years.

The Manila Film Center was a project of former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos, who also initiated the annual Manila International Film Festival (MIFF), where foreign actors, directors and producers were invited to the city to grace the filmfest.

From 1981 to 1986, the Manila Film Center was also home to the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP), a project of former presidential daughter Imee Marcos. The ECP produced such classics as Peque Gallaga's "Scorpio Nights" and Ishmael Bernal's "Himala."

Standing beside the Westin Philippine Plaza in the reclaimed area of the CCP Grounds, the Manila Film Center stood as symbol of film workers who had contributed their artistry for the recognition of Philippine cinema in the international arena.

The center had a film archive and nine theaters. But for the past 12 years, the Manila Film Center has not been operational. Tales circulated that the place is even haunted.

But this was not enough to stop a consortium of Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Filipino investors to resurrect the venue and make it the home of the Amazing Philippine Theater.

The production mounts the theatrical variety presentation, "The Amazing Philippine Show," which features Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and Korean folk dances, lip-sync numbers, comedy acts, hip-hop and traditional dances, among others.

Very popular in Thailand as part of a tour package, the show has attracted tourists from around the globe, and the producers are optimistic it would do the same in the Philippines.

"In Thailand, the show is spectacular because of the costumes and the lights," says Amazing Philippine Theater president Lee Jong Hyun. "But ours is definitely better. Our performers are skilled and talented. Those who've seen the show in Bangkok will surely agree that the Manila production is much better."

Directed by Casie Villarosa and Eric Aguilar Libramonte, "The Amazing Philippine Show" is doubly appealing because the beautiful and gorgeous performers are actually male, uncovering the artistry of transvestites and cross-dressers.

Bringing together the talent of the Filipino artists in acting, dancing, stage production, lighting design and costume design in a wide variety of numbers, "The Amazing Philippine Show" is set to delight audiences in all ages.

With the production, The Amazing Philippine Theater not only supports the goal of the Department of Tourism in attracting foreigners to visit the country, but also helps provide jobs for gay performers, who have been discriminated because of their sexual preference. Their involvement in the production offers them the chance to engage in an endeavor that gives them pride.

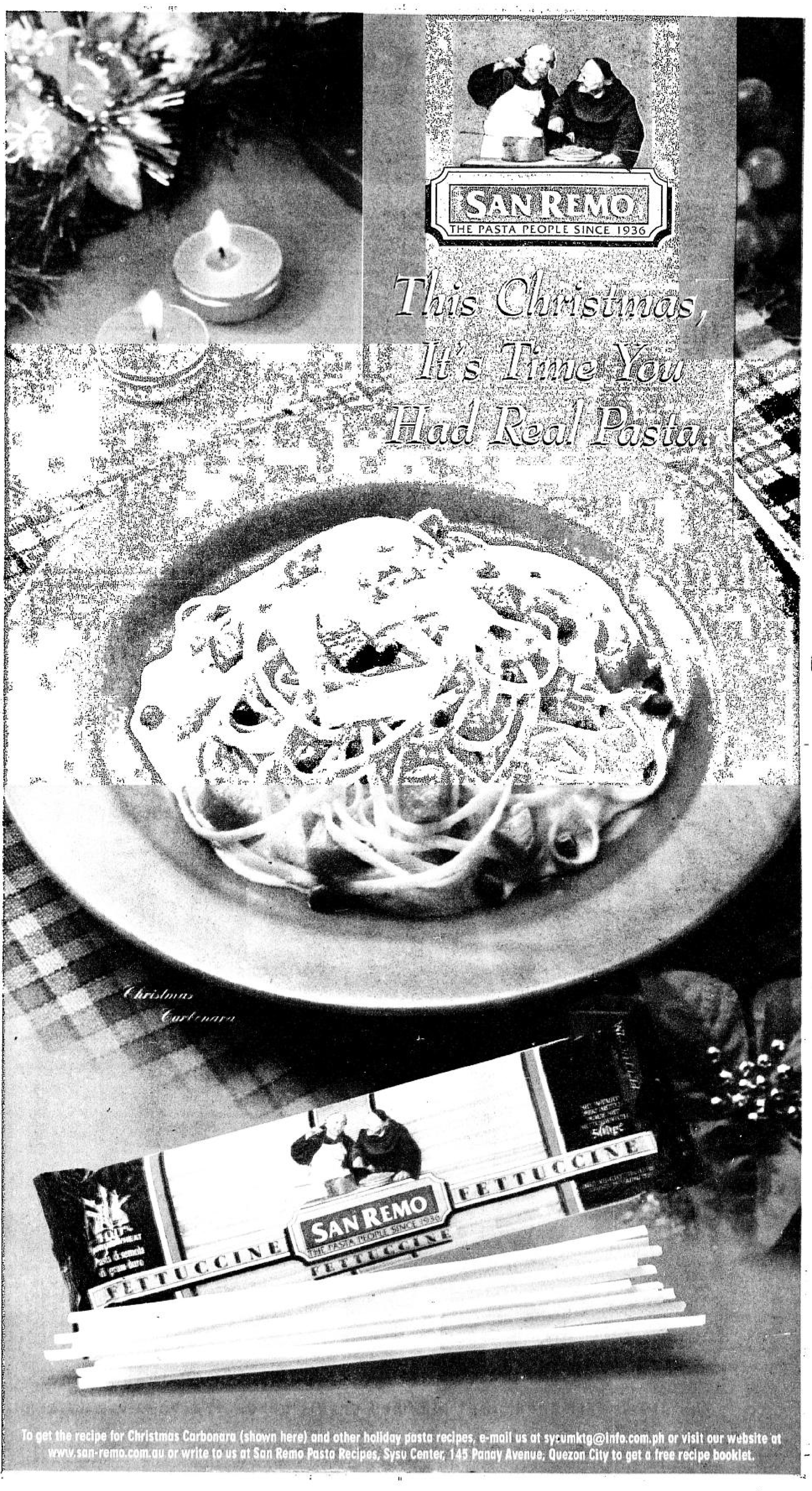
The show has Villarosa as musical director and production designer, Jerome Buzeta as costume designer, Chamberlain Estrada and lighting designer, Ai-Ai Piano as makeup artist and Boy Enaya as hairstylist. Choreographers are Ric Gonzalo, Justine Moreno, Lyndhong Cueto and Ram Alfante.

"The Amazing Philippine Show" is only one of the projects of the Amazing Philippine Theater. Plans are afoot for the show to be staged in Cebu early next year.

The company also extends its support to government programs of helping street children and orphans.

Showtime for "The Amazing Philippine Show" is at 7:30 p.m., Mondays to Sundays. From Dec. 21 onward, there are two performances at 7:30 and 9 p.m., Mondays to Sundays.

Tickets are available at the Manila Film Center box office, direct agents and selected hotels. Call 833-5758/5685/5795



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Cebu theater group's outstanding interpretation of 'Les Miz'

BY LUNA GRIÑO-INOCIAN

Les Misérables

CEBU thespic talent is in full bloom.

I RECEIVED exuberant text and e-mail messages from Iloilo after my article on "The Diary of Anne Frank" was published. All were profuse with thanks that they finally got into a national broadsheet and that their efforts finally got recognition beyond their immediate sphere of influence.

OF STAGE

It made me think that so much theater outside of Metro Manila goes unnoticed. How many live performances in other parts of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao get little or no exposure merely because they are out of sight and, thus, out of mind.

I have seen many wonderful productions brought to the CCP for some festival or others that very few get to see and enjoy because no one even knew they were in town. Sining Kambayoka's adaptation of "Midsummer Night's Dream" several years ago still lingers in my memory. Its sheer inventiveness and creativity left me awestruck (made even more awesome by the fact that they worked with a very limited budget).

And I have seen quite a few ingeniously wrought productions during my trips down South though it never occurred to me to write about them then. Now I wish I had. I would have—could have—done my little bit in bringing these works to mind. I could have brought our cosmopolitan yet paradoxically myopic attention to their commendable and valiant efforts to keep theater alive in "their own little corners." But it's better late than never.

Excellent performers

I was in Cebu this summer for two whole weeks coordinating Trumpets' Playshop at the SM City Cebu. Time was spent mainly at the mall supervising the daily classes, but we did get a chance to catch a live performance with our musical theater students.

We saw, at P50 per ticket, "Les Miserables—The Concert Musical Excerpts" at the University of Southern Philippines gymnasium produced by the Repertory of Young Professionals in Theater (Rypit).

The brochure given out at the gate stated: "Organized in September 2000, this organization is intended to provide the following goals: to be able to express one's self through the art of theater; to provide entertainment, enjoyment and a form of recreation for release of tension; to have a productive extra-curricular activity outside of work or school; to foster a positive development of character and personality through music and theater; and to provide an avenue for people to develop and expose their talents in music, speech and theater, thus deviating the youth from the temptation of drugs and other vices." Aside from these idealistic pronouncements, there wasn't much else about Rypit.

The brochure also had a listing of names of people involved—cast, crew, sponsors, creatives (but no bio data or write-ups). It would have been interesting to find out what they did when they weren't on stage because although the production was a facsimile of the 10th anniversary concert of "Les Miz" held at the Royal Albert Hall—staging, costumes and all—the voices were outstanding!

Much is said of the Cebuanos and their voices—the Pilita Coraleses, Dulces, Verni Vargas and scores of others who have created and fostered the all-too-true legend! Well, it was in evidence here... from the lead characters to the chorus. In fact, our jaws were permanently at a drop position as high note after high note was hit effortlessly and correctly! I swear they sounded like the record.

But therein lies the rub! If I were to fault this production for anything, it is that it did look and sound all too like the concert and the record! Plus the sound system and lighting that left much to be desired (okay, so maybe it was because it was a bright afternoon in a gymnasium filled with windows but I swear the people who weren't meant to be ghosts looked like ghosts)! And they could have learned a thing or two about distressing costumes from Mio Infante, too!

Though it was difficult not to compare the actors' performances with those of professionals I usually work with (i.e., more polished and practiced), it was also not difficult to see that there certainly was a lot of talent there. It is to their credit that we still appreciated the fabulous voices despite the sound system. And—we also had about 20 otherwise indifferent preteens and teenagers humming tunes from "Les Miz" for the next few days after the performance.

It is even more to their credit that there was a performance at all! I know what mounting a production is like—the fund-raising, promoting, marketing, etc. It is a difficult enough job in Metro Manila during the peak season with a pretty good track record to help, the press to support and the advertisers readily accessible. It must be a lot tougher in Cebu! Especially during the summer months! I mean, most theater companies shy away from summer performances. And yet they pulled it off—with a pretty good turnout at the matinee we attended and quite an impressive list of sponsors, too!

It looked like they pretty much achieved what they set out to do and got many of their goals covered!

Now I hear that there are several other theater companies in Cebu that also do excellent work. I hope to catch their performances as well... maybe next summer... maybe sooner! *Mabuhay ang teatrong Pilipino!*

Play imparts values of caring and sharing

COUPLES for Christ lives out the spirit of the season with the presentation of "Regalo! Regalo!" at UP Theater on Dec. 22, with a matinee show at 3 p.m. and gala night at 7 p.m.

"Regalo! Regalo!" explores the world of children as it tells the story of two best friends—a rich girl and a poor boy. Yes, this is a love story—but not a fairy tale. It portrays poverty in our country as seen through the eyes of children.

The play features 60 boys and girls, half of whom come from Bagong Silang in Caloocan City, the biggest squatter relocation site in the country, and the other half from well-off families. All of them are members of Kids for Christ. None of them have had previous acting experience but their inborn talents and the natural earnestness of children shine through in the play.

"Regalo! Regalo!" is written and directed by Gay Racoma (with Jean Mugcalas as co-writer). Choreography is by Gigi Aragon with Make Montilla and Ber Relox. Music and sound is by Bianca Dinglasan and set by Japs Viray. Lighting director is Shanha Medenilla; costumes and makeup by Josette Urgino, Nina Tale and Dindi Besinga.

Racoma says, "The message of the play is quite simple. If we are to renew our country, if we are to eradicate poverty, we will have to start with the children. For one, they have a pure heart. For another, they don't have the baggages that adults have."

Tickets for "Regalo! Regalo!" are available at the UP Theater box office.

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Bayanihan a hit in California

NEW life and vitality to vernacular dance

THEY were a big hit 13 years ago when they made their last visit to Southern California. This time was no exception.

Southern Californians welcomed the Bayanihan Philippine National Dance Company with open arms when they performed at the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts recently. It was a welcome respite for the Americans who were still in a state of shock because of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The Bayanihan has toured the world for more than 40 years as cultural emissaries for the Philippines. Last year, the company was officially designated the National Folk Dance Company of the Philippines. In addition to being the first Filipino group to perform on Broadway, they were also the first non-American dance company to perform at New York's Lincoln Center. They were also the first Philippine cultural group to perform in Russia, China and South China.

For their performance in Southern California, Bayanihan's artistic team revived and revamped their original Broadway debut repertoire. Some of the dances were replaced with fresh choreography and the technical aspects were updated to take advantage of the latest developments in lighting and staging technology.

Also new to the American public was the presence of choreographer Ferdinand B. Jose who assumed the position held for 41 years by founding choreographer and ethnographic researcher Dr. Lucretia Urtula who passed away two years ago. Urtula's son was in the audience and he was delighted with the performance.

"I saw my mommy in every dance and song. Extremely great," said Ski Urtula. "She was brought to life again."

There were five major sections in the two hour and 15 minute show. Each section had its own style of costumes, all of them a fascinating mix of color and design. Different instruments were also used in the different section.

Simplicity in costume marked the first section, "Bird of Bright Plumage," which opened with men wielding sticks in pagan times in the mountains of northern Luzon. The Spanish section followed with a touch of flamenco to guitars and a bass.

With "Mindanao Mosaic," gongs, a xylophone and a drum led gradually to a high point of elegance in a beautiful princess pursued among the clacking bamboo of the *tinikling*.

Jose's stamp was seen in "Visions Renewed," which portrays the indigenous rituals and customs of the people from Sulu. The suite featured one of the highlights of the performance, a dance in which the dancers balance candles atop their heads.

"Our goal is to give new life and new vitality to the dances without losing their authentic flavor," Jose said.

The final section began in the shadows with lights held in hands. The lights went to heads and danced off. There were roars of approval from the crowd.

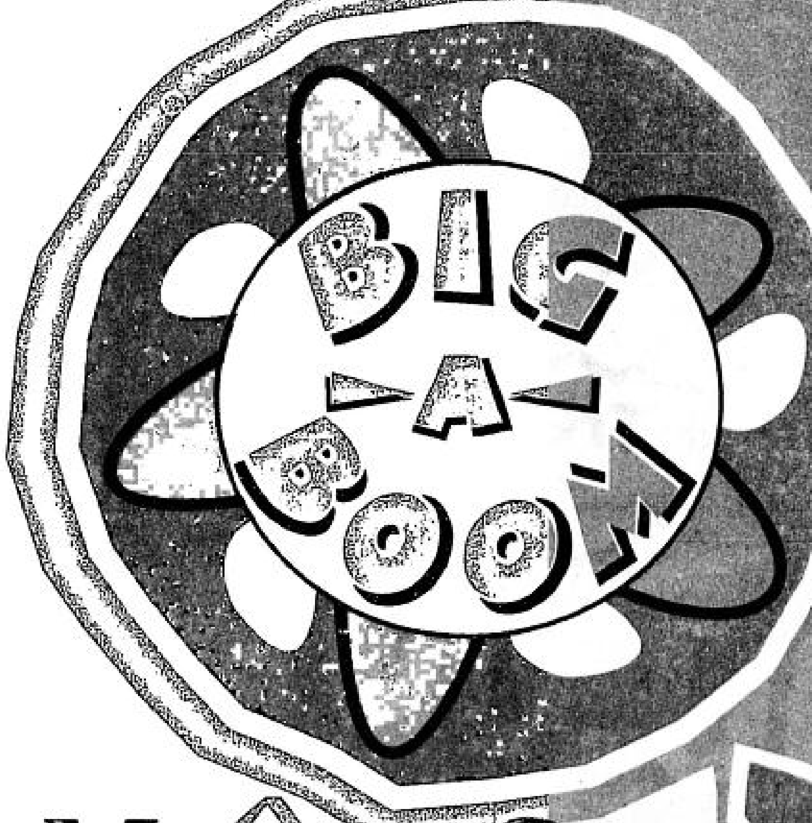
This ended with the "People Under the Sun," which was about young people having fun while they farmed. At one point, the women came on with yellow checkered gingham dresses and seemed to think that was funny. Some also carried filled wine glasses and balanced them not only in their hands but on their heads.

To top off a memorable performance, there was the singing of "California Here We Come" and "God Bless America," which was highly appreciated by the crowd.

"We loved the show so much that we hope the Bayanihan can come again soon," said Alta Alticre. "More Filipinos and Americans would love to see the show again."

Another member of the audience said the performance was a showcase of what being a Filipino was all about.

"Very entertaining. It's a showcase of Filipino customs and traditions depicted in traditional dances," said Elizabeth Casanova. "My family really enjoyed it very much."



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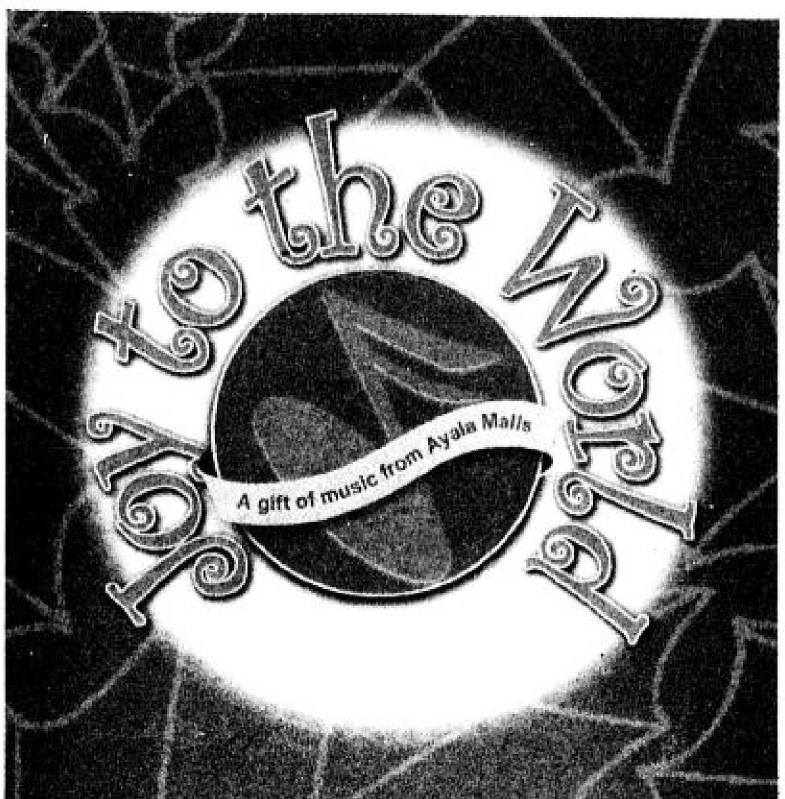
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Beneficiary: Batang Munti Foundation
AYALA CENTER CEBU
DONNA CRUZ
Dec. 15, Lagoon Area, 7pm
Beneficiary: Children's Shelter for Cebu
THE COMPANY
Dec. 16, Lagoon Area, 7pm
Beneficiary: Christ for Asia Foundation
THE UNFORGETTABLES
Dec. 23, Lagoon Area, 7pm
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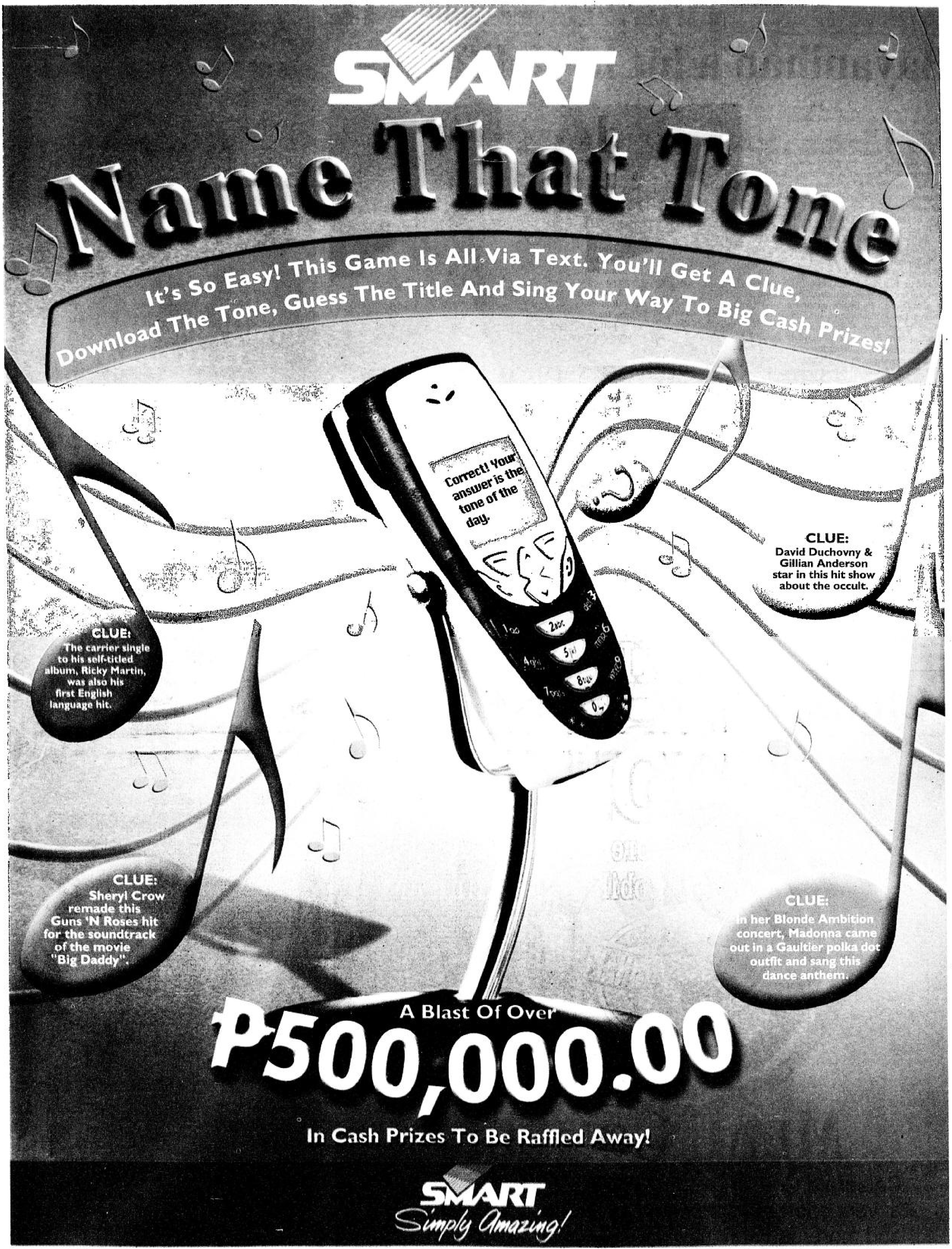

SMART
Name That Tone
It's So Easy! This Game Is All Via Text. You'll Get A Clue, Download The Tone, Guess The Title And Sing Your Way To Big Cash Prizes!
Correct! Your answer is the tone of the day.
A Blast Of Over
₱500,000.00
In Cash Prizes To Be Raffled Away!
SMART
Simply Amazing!

CLUE:
The carrier single to his self-titled album, Ricky Martin, was also his first English language hit.

CLUE:
David Duchovny & Gillian Anderson star in this hit show about the occult.

CLUE:
Sheryl Crow remade this Guns 'N Roses hit for the soundtrack of the movie "Big Daddy".

CLUE:
In her Blonde Ambition concert, Madonna came out in a Gaultier polka dot outfit and sang this dance anthem.

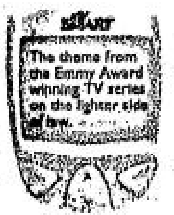
SMART NAME THAT TONE SETS THE BEAT FOR SOUNDS AND PRIZES

Register Now!

Key in NTT and send to 234.
Then follow the succeeding instructions;

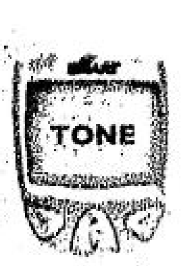
- Key in NAME <your full name> and send to 234.
- Key in BIRTH <mmddyyyy> and send to 234.
- Key in ADD <address> and send to 234.

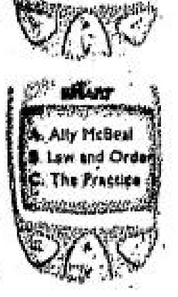
Your registration automatically earns you a raffle entry for all weekly draws.


SMART
The theme from the Emmy Award winning TV series on the lighter side of law.

Play The Game!

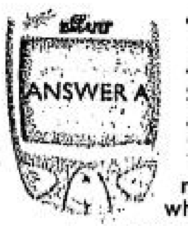
You will then receive a clue about the mystery tone of the day.




A. Ally McBeal
B. Law and Order
C. The Practice

Guess The Title By Downloading The Tone!

Key in TONE and send to 234. Together with the downloaded tone, you will also receive the multiple choice set of ringtone titles.



Text in your Answer!

Simply key in ANSWER <A; B or C> and send to 234. You will receive a message telling you whether you got the correct answer or not. There will only be one chance to guess the mystery tone of the day. Each correct answer earns you 5 raffle entries for the Weekly, Monthly and Grand draws.

INVITE 09182442322

Invite Your Friends And Earn More Raffle Entries!

Key in INVITE <your friend's SMART celfone number> and send to 234. Each invite earns you 1 raffle entry, to be added to your total raffle entries.

To redisplay the clue, key in SHOW and send to 234.

To check your raffle entries, key in POINTS and send to 234.

The mystery tone of the day will be updated at 12 midnight daily.

Only subscribers with ringtone-download-capable handsets will be able to hear the mystery tone of the day. However, downloading is necessary to get the multiple choice set of ringtone titles. A subscriber without the necessary handset can still answer based on the clue and multiple choice set of ringtone titles.

WIN THESE PRIZES!

DRAW DATE	CASH PRIZE
GRAND DRAW: (1 winner) Feb. 11, 2002	₱200,000.00
MONTHLY DRAWS: (1 winner per draw) Jan. 14 and Feb. 11, 2002	₱50,000.00
WEEKLY DRAWS: (3 winners per draw) Dec. 21, 2001, Jan. 2, 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 4, and 11, 2002	₱10,000.00

**There will be a standard charge of ₱12.00 per ringtone download and ₱2.50 per message for all other transactions.*
**Cut-off time for the entries will be at 11:59 PM of the day before the draw date.*
**Ringtone-download-capable handsets are: Nokia 3210, 3310, 3330, 6150, 6210, 6250, 7110, 8210, 8250, 8310, and 9210.*

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Tribute to Redentor Romero tonight

BY PABLO A. TARIMAN
Contributor

EXACTLY a year ago today, conductor Red Romero headed toward the departure area of the Centennial airport without an airplane ticket while I accompanied Russian violinist Anastasia Chebotareva checking in for her Tuguegarao flight on her way to Isabela. I called Romero to tell him I wasn't able to raise funds for his air ticket to Isabela so he just couldn't join us. "Well, I was kidding," I said. "I was just making you feel guilty on this trip without me."

I am thinking of this incident as Romanian violinist Alexandru Tomescu and Korean flutist Hae Won Shin with pianist J. Greg Zuniega pay tribute to the late Filipino conductor tonight (Dec. 17) at the CCP Little Theater.

Tonight is the first Christmas concert of the National Philharmonic Society without its founder who passed away in March this year.

As part-time impresario, Maestro Romero was my Romanian and Russian connection and I guess that link would die with him. Romero is also part of my musical education because he exposed me to great artists whom he brought

TRIBUTE/ p.F6

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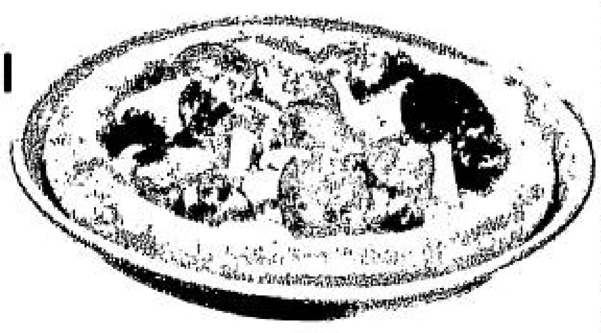
PER DTI-NCR PERMIT # 1947, SERIES OF 2001



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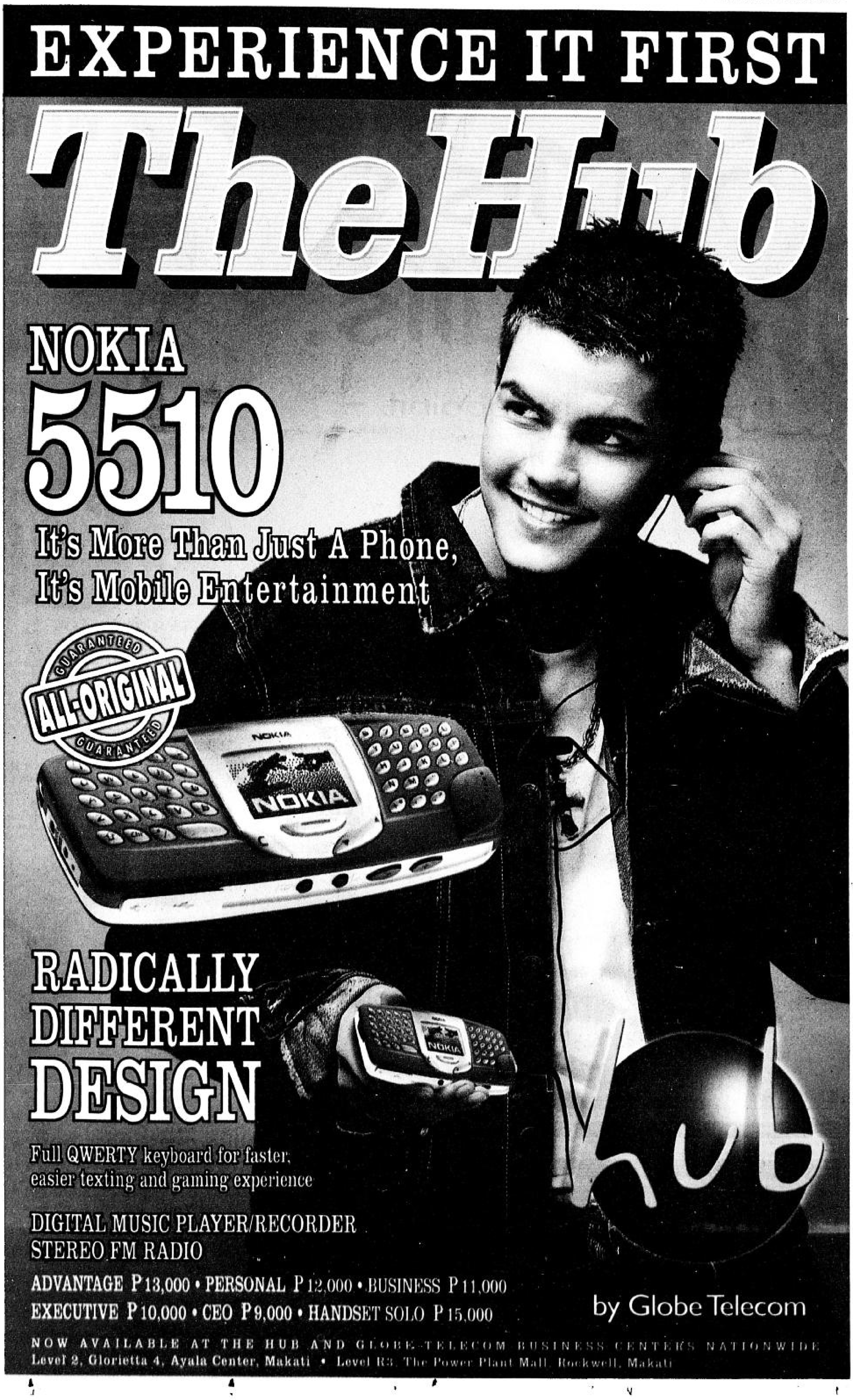

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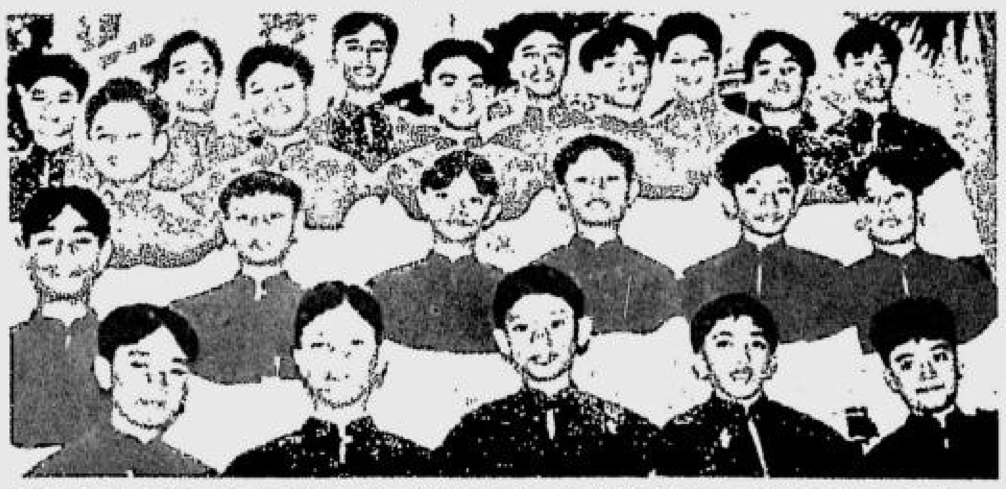
Acting workshop

JUILLIARD graduate Ana Valdes-Lim opens a series of acting classes on Jan. 21. The author of "Workshop: A Manual on Acting" by Anvil Publishing, Ana will be teaching improvisation, scene study, masks, stage voice and diction. Call 879-8230 or (0917) 899-8158.



THE LAS Piñas Boys Choir will hold a concert of Christmas carols at the lobby lounge of the Traders Hotel (3001 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City) until Dec. 24 while patrons enjoy a buffet of Yuletide *merienda*. Call 523-7011 local 2402.

'Disney on Ice' at Araneta

BE A PART of the magical moment in entertainment history when "Disney on Ice" celebrates 100 years of Disney magic at the Araneta Coliseum from Dec. 22 to Jan. 6.

Enjoy Walt Disney's unforgettable stories and captivating characters that have entertained families the world over for a century now. The celebration features Mickey, Minnie, Pinocchio, Jiminy Cricket, Buzz Lightyear, Woody and the Mouseketeers.

Enchanting moments from "Mulan," "A Bug's Life" and "The Lion King" will be presented. Beautifully choreographed figure skating, tremendous production numbers and well-loved songs will bring fond memories of Disney.

Share this skating spectacular with your friends and family as Mickey and the gang take you on a whirlwind tour of many of your favorite Disney adventures. Tickets are now available at all SM Ticketnet outlets.

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Per DTI-NCR permit no. 4002, series of 2001.

Susan Fernandez and Thin Pan Alley in Christmas concert

WHAT do media men and women Conrado de Quiros, Joy de los Reyes, Pete Lacaba, Shiela Coronel, Marites Vitug and advertising executive Susan Dimacali have in common with former and current government people like Presidential Spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao, Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, Trade Secretary Mar Roxas, League of Mayors officer Melchor Nacario, former agrarian reform secretary Horacio "Boy" Morales and former Neda top man Cielito Habito?

They all share a common past in struggle and tribulation, and while they now follow divergent paths, they continue to share a common love for good food, good music and good companionship.

They are also common friends of singer-teacher-advocate Susan Fernandez who has promised to give them a good measure of such pleasurable things in an event called "A Christmas with Susan and Friends" Dec. 18, 8 p.m., at the Savarin Restaurant on Kalayaan Avenue, QC.

An occasion for poignant remembrance of things past, the event will also be an opportunity for guests to savor the French, Spanish and Continental culinary delights of the Savarin kitchen.

"A Christmas with Susan and Friends" will feature Fernandez and the Thin Alley Band jamming Christmas songs and classic jazz, pop and folk tunes from the '70s and '80s.

The Thin Alley Band, composed or guitarist Edgar Avenir, bassist Bong Concepcion, saxophonist Rudy Sumang and keyboardist Mario Elepano, will also regale guests with classic mainstream and fusion jazz tunes, including "Take Five," "Take the A-Train," "Route 66," "Satin Doll," "God Blest the Child" and a medley of Beatles songs that the band has prepared in memory of the late George Harrison.

Visit Savarin Restaurant at 33 Kalayaan Ave., Diliman, QC, or call Edgar at 925-6192. Tickets are also available at Popular Bookstore, Tomas Morato Extension, QC.

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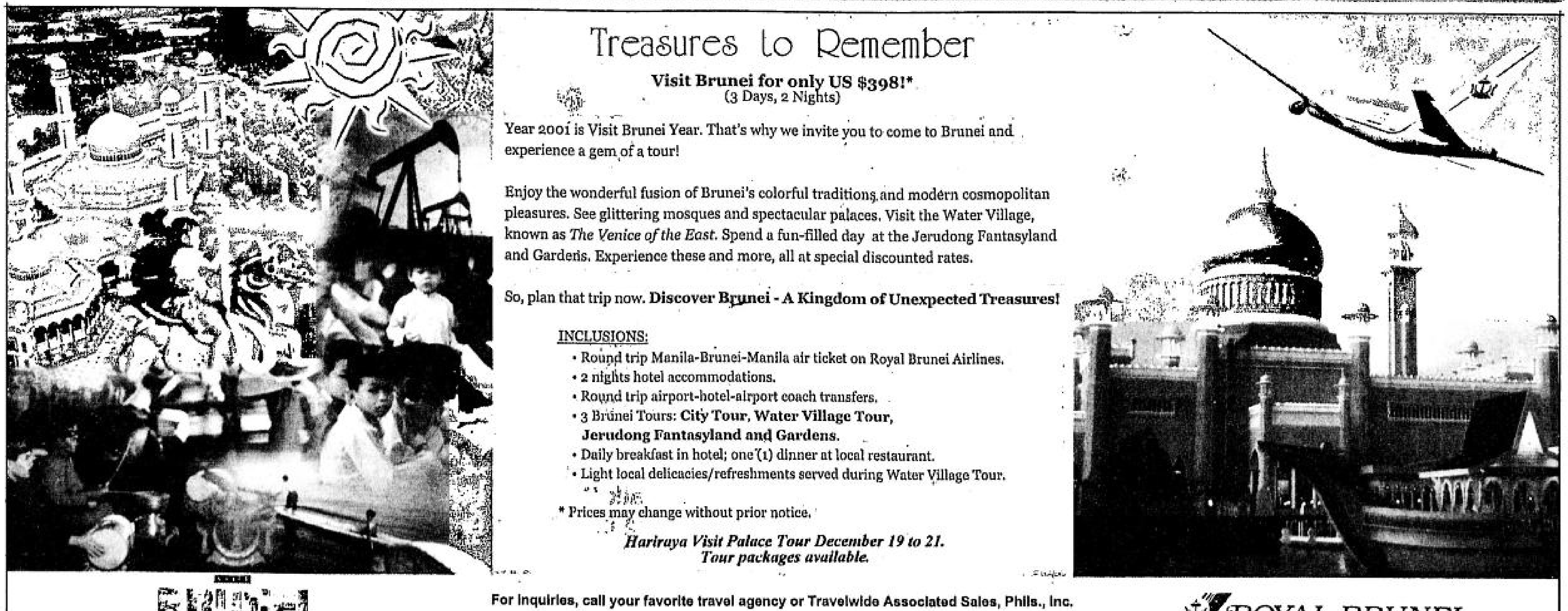
Rustan's

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1921, Series of 2001.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THE CAST of "The Secret Garden"

'THE SECRET GARDEN,' 'ONE HUNDRED SONGS OF MARY HELEN FEE'

Voices of hope, voices from the past

BY CORA LLAMAS
Contributor

REVIEWS

THE SINGING voices in Repertory Philippines' production of "The Secret Garden," the family musical of Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon, are superb. The enthralling performance of each ensemble member is enough reason to watch the show.

Director Zeneida Amador doesn't pull her directing punches with this semi-children's classic based on the novel of Frances Hodgson Burnett, backed up by reliable regulars Noel Rayos, Karla Gutierrez and Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo, Miguel Faustmann and Joy Virata ensure that the show lives up to set high standards. The only drawback is that the material demands presentation on a bigger scale. Its scope of vision and sweeping panoramas would have been better served in the Meralco Theater, for instance.

An enormous stage would have highlighted further the contrast between the magic and wonder of the secret garden that orphaned Mary (Mazie Cajucom)is looking for, against the depressing, wintry backdrop of her Uncle Archie's (Rayos) ancestral home. Like Mary, Archie is an orphan, though an emotional one. The death of his wife Lily (Gutierrez) during childbirth a decade earlier had scarred the hunchbacked gentleman for life. He loses himself in his work, distancing himself from any human contact, including that of his son Colin (Hans Dimayuga).

Understandably harboring all sorts of feelings of resentment and rejection, Craven Jr. literally spends all his days whining in his bedroom, waiting for his so-called inevitable death. It does

VOICES / p.F5

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2. Ang contest ay binubuo ng 2 rounds.

Round 1
May dalawang team na maglalaban para sa Round 1. Bawat team ay may dalawang members at bibigyan ng 1 minuto upang masindihan ang Powerlux Christmas Tree. Isa sa kanila ang papasok sa loob ng dark room na may mga empty boxes ng Philips Superlux, pati na rin unbranded boxes. Kailangan niyang i-shoot sa butas ang mga boxes para makuha ng kanyang team mate. Ang mga boxes na nakuha ay kailangan isuksok ng kanyang team mate sa pigeonhole ng Christmas Tree upang mabuo ang Powerlux Christmas Tree. Ang winning team ay magkakamit ng P20,000 at siyang maglalaro sa Jackpot Round at ang losing team naman ay magkakamit ng P10,000. Ang team na may pinakamaraming Philips Superlux boxes na naisuksok ang siyang maglalaro sa Round 2.

Round 2/Final Round
Ang isa sa team na nanalo ay hahawak ng giant na Power Wand. May isang mahabang wire na nahahati sa levels na kailangang idaan niya ang karayom within 3 minutes. Dapat hindi tumama ang karayom sa wire, dahil kapag tumama, tutunog ang buzzer at kailangang magsimula sa huling marker na nadaanan. Pwedeng tumigil sa marker ng 5 seconds upang makapahinga. Ang cash prize na mapapanalunan ay depende kung saan abutan ng buzzer after 3 minutes. Bawat level ay may kaukulang cash prize, gaya ng P5,000, P10,000, P20,000, P50,000, P100,000, P200,000, P300,000 at P1,000,000. Habang papataas ang cash prize, mas mahirap na level ang dadaanan ng karayom. Kapag hindi natapos sa unang level ay walang mapapanalunan ang contestant. Kapag hindi natapos ang susunod na level, ang mapapanalunan lamang ay ang naunang level na natapos. Pagkatapos ng 3 minutes, tatanungin ang contestant kung gusto pa niyang makakuha ng mas malaking pera. Bibigyan siya ng 30 seconds para umabot sa next marker. Kung magagawa niya ito, sa kanya ang cash equivalent. Kung tumama siya sa wire, ang makukuha lang niya ang premyo sa marker ***bago sa huling pinagdaanan***. At kung ayaw naman magsugal, pwede rin tumigil na at kunin and cash equivalent ng huling marker pagkatapos ng 3 minutes. Ang premyong mapapanalunan ay makukuha sa Philips office, 106 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City o tawagan si Cecile E. Domingo sa 845-7835.

3. Ang Promong ito ay valid sa GMA lamang.

4. Para maging homepartner, isulat ang contest title, ang iyong pangalan, address, telephone number at lagda sa likod ng empty carton ng Philips Superlux. Ilagay sa isang puting sobre at ipadala sa Philips Superlux Power Pasko Panalo, c/o.Promo Edge Corporation 5th Floor MJL Bldg, 1175 Pasong Tamo Makati City. Ang mga entries na natanggap dalawang araw bago ang contest day (every Wednesday) ang isasali sa draw. Ang promo ay mula October 31 hanggang Dec. 19, 2001.

5. Ang winning homepartner ay magkakamit ng P20,000 at bubunutin sa harap ng DTI representative pagkatapos ng studio game sa Eat Bulaga. Maaring makuha ang prize sa Promo Edge Corporation 5th Floor MJL Bldg. 1175 Pasong Tamo Makati City. Ang nanalong homepartner ay padadalhan ng rehistradong sulat. Magdala ng isang valid identification documents at ang registered mail upang makuha ang napanalunan.

6. Ang mga kawani ng Philips Company at Promo Edge Corporation pati ang kanilang mga kamag-anak hanggang ikalawang antas ng consanguinity o affinity ay hindi maaring sumali sa promong ito.

7. Ang Philips ang siyang magbabayad ng 20% tax sa premyomg higit sa P10,000.00.

8. Ang promo ay magsisimula sa Oct. 24, 2001 hanggang sa Dec. 19, 20001.

9. Ang participant ay maaring manalo ng minsan lamang sa game at sa raffle during the promo period.

10. Ang premyo ay maaaring kunin hanggang 60 days mula sa pagkatanggap ng rehistradong sulat.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1675. Series of 2001.

PHILIPS Let's make things better.

Voices of hope, voices from the past

(From page F4)

n't help that his uncle, Dr. Neville (Raul Montesa), lusts after the manor and has diagnosed him as fatally ill.

Naturally, the charming, if predictable plot has Mary, the distant stranger, breaking in all sorts of rules, discovering the dead Lily's long-lost garden, and bringing love and life back to her uncle and cousin. Of course, Colin gets to stand up and walk, throwing his wheelchair away forever.

The plot of this feel-good fantasy tale isn't hard to follow, but sometimes it's too much of a well-wisher for its own good. The lead roles bring a certain humanity to their parts, which either makes some scenes more refreshingly heartwarming or causes them to lose some of their sting.

For example, Rayos plays the loner lord as a heartbroken lover who still retains a measure of compassion under his frigid exterior; this approach works with his more tender moments with his son, the flashback romantic memories with his late wife, and the happy turnabout at the end. During his first few appearances, though, he didn't seem that intimidating; the dramatic tension would have been heightened had he first looked too cold and unapproachable for Mary.

In the same way, Montesa's Neville certainly did not seem sinister, though Mary accuses him to his face. He genuinely appears to care for his brother and nephew. Even his solo number in which he confesses his own frustrated ambitions makes him look tragic, not evil. When Archie banishes him from the manor in the end, we can only feel sorry for the misguided physician.

Fortunately, the musical numbers more than overcome these small inadequacies, especially the impassioned chorus of the ensemble during the transition scenes. Whatever the production may have lacked in scale, the immediacy, urgency, and sense of drama in those numbers brought the story forward. Amador also adds to the magic by infusing in a sense of the ethereal. The dearly departed in the story—Lily, Mary's parents Albert and Rose (Jeremy Aguado and Cathy Azanza), and her Indian mystical guides Fakir (Oliver Usison) and Ayah (Marise Santos-Borlaza), hauntingly float like wisps, not leaving, but not quite there.

Walls at the end of the stage become translucent, revealing the thoughts of past spirits. Lighting situated at just the right place easily forms the divide between the real and what is remembered, though the memory seems to be so convincing to the characters at that moment. Mary and the other characters keep alluding to the whispering spirits in the ancient house.

They need not have been frightened. As it turns out, the ghosts are old dreams in old haunts that refuse to leave because they deserve a better day.

"The Secret Garden" has been extended at the RCBC Plaza until Dec. 23.

Thomasite play

THE VOICE in Tanghalang Pilipino's (TP) production of "One Hundred Songs of Mary Helen Fee" is actually a monologue, and it works best when it remains that way.

To visually enhance the heroine's struggle, director Nonon Padilla fills up the little space at CCP Tanghalang Batute with ensemble members reenacting her thoughts with little props, e.g. the traveling ships on their shoulders.

In my opinion, the ensemble works best when they play townspeople and extras. But when they float with props on their heads at certain key moments, substituting as icons to augment the script's points, the scene is distracting and even annoying.

What Padilla has on stage were enough: Tony Perez's script and Irma Adlawan-Marasigan's performance, which is probably one of the best this year.

Perez's meticulously researched script is poignant and revealing, never taking sides with the forces in conflict, sympathetic to its lone heroine and speaker while slyly displaying her own weaknesses.

Irma Adlawan-Marasigan presents us the face of an enemy and ally at the same time. As the idealistic Thomasite teacher who comes at the turn of the century to educate Uncle Sam's little brown brother, she gives us a whole new perspective of ourselves as Filipinos. At the same time, she unwittingly opens to us the historical roots of colonialism, the influences of which are still felt up to today.

IRMA Adlawan-Marasigan

The tragedy of Mary Fee is that, unlike her more manipulative compatriots, she genuinely loves her Filipino students and desires their improvement in life. Yet, in the end, she remains a stranger, an outsider looking in, seeing more of the Filipinos than any other foreigner can, yet not totally understanding them. Adlawan-Marasigan wonderfully conveys this mixture of emotions: her compassion, zeal to teach, sense of bafflement at our culture, and even a slight condescension that might have been a prelude to bigotry.

The eagerness of her students to learn naturally pleases her. Their courtship rituals are a strain to her American sense of individualism. Their collective religious reaction to an epidemic scares her. While recognizing their talents, she is appalled at their extreme sensitivity to criticism and lack of discipline. In one of the funniest and yet most disturbing moments, she can't understand how the Filipinos—"whose poverty is unbelievable by American standards"—can live happily under dire conditions. Her prognosis is still rankling to today's modern audiences who happen to be the descendants of her students: they can live contentedly with poverty because they have not evolved or matured enough to be dissatisfied with their lot.

Through all of this, Mary Fee still manages to project a concern and care amidst the bit of haughtiness. We are as baffled by her as she is by us.

Perez gives no reason for the townspeople's attempted assassination of the Thomasites; none was necessary. For all their good intentions, the American teachers never quite overcame their alienness to the people under their "benevolent" tutelage.

'The Secret Garden' displays the transformative power of love while 'Mary Helen Fee' shows past is bridge to the present

ORPHAN Mary (Charlie Barredo) reunites with her Uncle Archibald (Michael Williams) in a scene from "The Secret Garden."

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Tribute to Redentor Romero tonight

(From page F1)

here. He loved music and loved it so much he didn't care if he passed away without material wealth.

It is on that note that I will personally remember Redentor Romero.

For sure, the week is going to be dominated by Tomescu, who started his Manila engagement with a special performance for American investor Wes Loran and wife Jacqui who celebrated their 31st wedding anniversary with Bizet and Puccini arias (by soprano Rachelle Gerodias) and a Tchaikovsky concerto (with soloist Tomescu with the Crosswave Symphony Orchestra under conductor Josefino "Chino" Toledo) at the elegant ballroom of the Ilustrado Restaurant.

The acoustics of the hall was not voice-friendly, but Gerodias transcended this limitation with a ringing voice limned with stunning dramatic flair in the Bizet and Puccini arias ("Je dis que rien ne m'pouvante" from "Carmen," "Quando men vo" from "Boheme" and "Signore, ascolta" from "Turandot").

VIOLINIST Alexandru Tomescu

As for Tomescu, there was no way he could fail in the Tchaikovsky D Major Concerto. His technical skill was superb, but his artistry was even more beguiling. That standing ovation he truely deserved.

Tonight at the CCP, he plays the Ravel and Franck sonatas, and tomorrow at the St. Cecilia's Hall, he plays the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Manila Symphony under Arturo Molina. The violinist opens the 2nd Cagayan Valley International Music Festival at the Hotel Roman's Ville in Ilagan, Isabela on Dec. 20, and at the Mother Madeleine Hall of St. Paul University in Tuguegarao City on Dec. 21. Call (0918) 737-6901.

AMERICAN investor Wes Loran and wife Jacqui (partly hidden) along with pianist Ingrid Sala Santamaria and CCP chair Baltazar Endriga lead the standing ovation for Tomescu in a command performance at Ilustrado Restaurant.

Another event not to be missed is the performance of bass baritone Jonathan Zaens at the PPO Christmas concert dominated by Strauss waltzes and Christmas carols under the baton of Ruggero Barbieri. Zaens sang the role of Leporello in Don Giovanni at the Prague State Opera.

Meanwhile, flutist Hae Won Shin who plays Massenet's "Meditation" (from "Thais") and a Red Romero arrangement tonight thinks music has a special role in these trying times. Her message is apt for this season of hope.

Ms Shin told the INQUIRER: "I believe music heals people's heart, especially when children play it. It also gives great strength to adults. I believe we can promote peace by teaching classical music to children and by promoting music, we can reduce violence."

KOREAN flutist Hae Won Shin

The latest issue of Music News carries a special tribute on Romero. Call 721-7255 or 643-7428.

Here and there

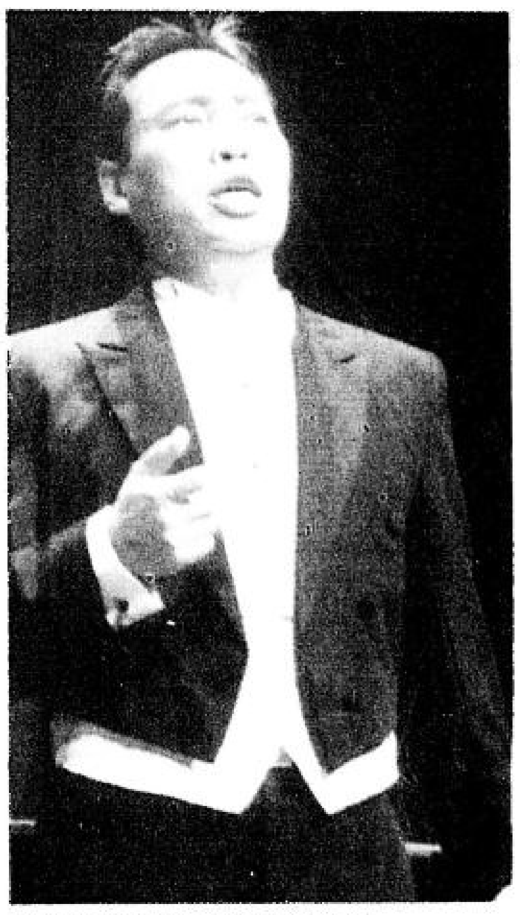
AFTER THE PASAMBA-QUINTO team-up of cello concertos, another record-breaker in the music scene is the guitar duo of Lester Demetillo and Gerardo Duran who performed the guitar transcription of Bach's Goldberg Variations at the Goethe Haus and later at the Filipinas Heritage Library in Makati.

The first to break the record in the original version was, of course, pianist Reynaldo Reyes who played it in October last year.

But the piece needs an informal introduction before a concert. If you are hearing this piece for an hour and without intermission, you must know why the interpreters undertake this musical venture. What is the challenge in this piece for the classical guitar? What is in this piece for music lovers who haven't heard of its impact in the European music scene?

In the Goethe Haus performance of this piece, the show-stealer was the huge backdrop of the Bach score donated by a patron of the arts. It made the performance more dramatic.

That was quite a feat when businessman Dennis Ting figured in a voice recital at the Dalisay Aldaba Hall with pianist Jude Areopagita in an evening of art songs by Scarlatti, Bellini, Obradors, Donaudy and Tosti, among others. Midway into the recital, it was obvious he was nursing a cold and suddenly the audience was converted into a nervous crowd, wondering if the recitalist would survive the vocal "bullfight" unscathed.



TENOR businessman Dennis Ting

Many things worked for the tenor-businessman. He wasn't daunted a bit. He sailed through the Puccini aria ("Chella mi creda libero e lontano" from "La Fanciulla del West") with flying color. Of course, the runny nose seared some of the art songs but he kept his cool.

One thing about this recital was that the singer had good taste in choosing his repertoire. It was a program that showed a person who really loved good music and not audience adulation. It was not the finest voice in town, but the singer proved he could attempt art songs, get the notes right and be fulfilled by the attempt.

It is a wonder that professional singers get exposure abroad and go home totally devoid of good taste. Which means you don't have to leave home to acquire taste. You get it by listening to the right music and reading endless literature about them. That's what Dennis Ting actually did without a regular voice mentor.

Something odd happen on the way to Cecile Licad's engagement in Uruguay where she was supposed to play Rachmaninoff's "Variations on a Theme by Paganini" and the Saint-Saens Second Piano Concerto. On the day she was supposed to rehearse, the orchestra staged a strike. But conductor Piero Gamba was not daunted. He hired two pianists to accompany Licad and voila, the concert went ahead with just the Saint-Saens concerto and ended in an ovation.

A week later, she played Beethoven No. 1 in Puerto Rico and she didn't expect audiences to rave the way they do with a Saint-Saens concerto. To her surprise, the pianissimo ending of the piece ended in an audience euphoria reminiscent of her concerts in Wisconsin where both critics and audiences were hard put to get superlatives to describe her performance.

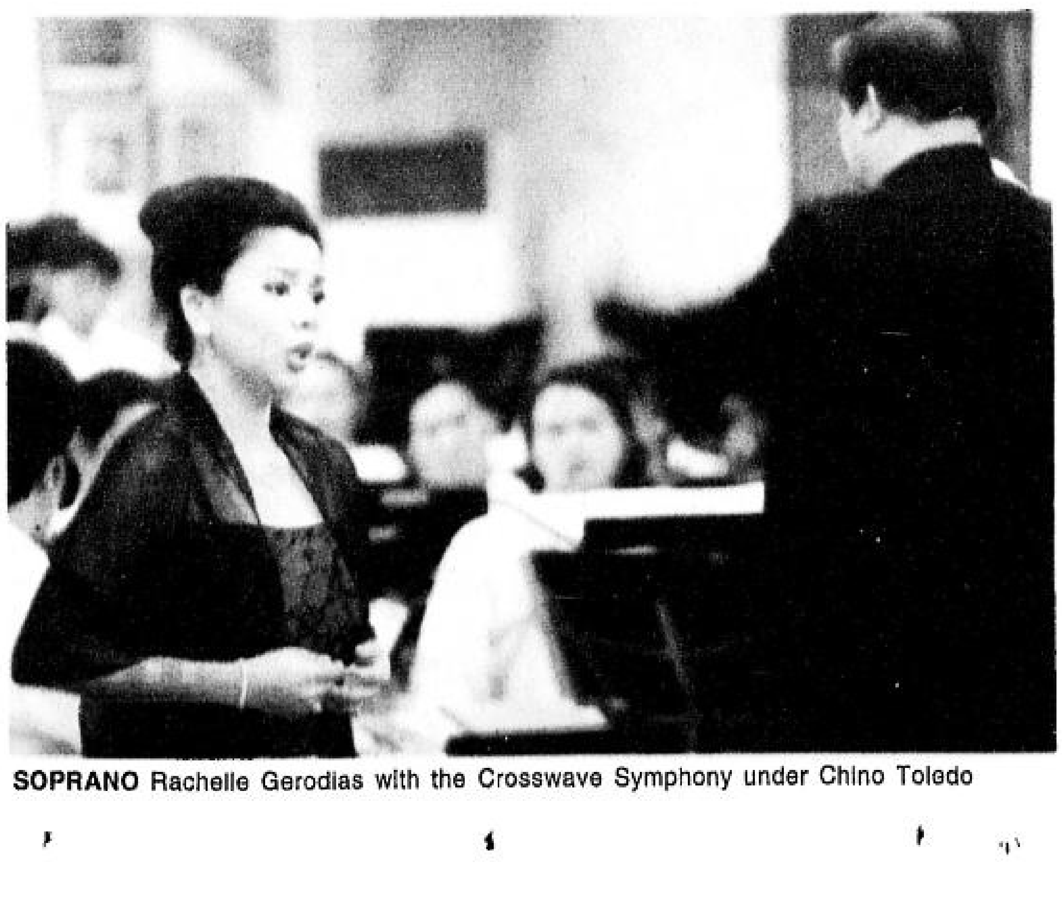
* * *

The San Miguel Philharmonic mounted a dry run outreach concert in Bacolod City last week at the University of St. La Salle. It was 80-percent pop and 20-percent classic (and very light at that). I hope this is not a clue to the future programming of this orchestra.

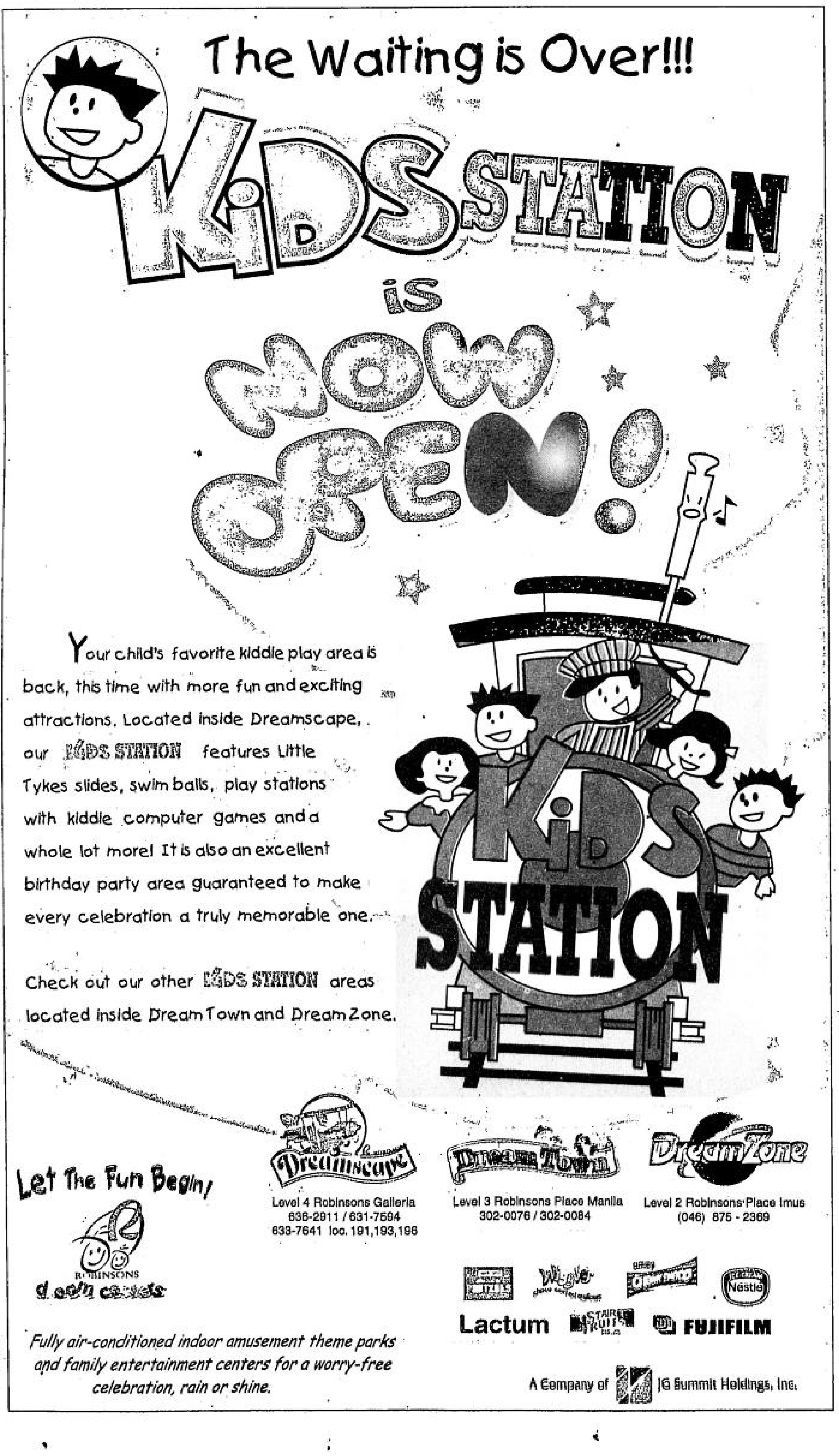
* * *

Melissa Lopez-Exmundo, a violin graduate of the University of Toronto, and pianist Jonathan Arevalo-Coo, will present free concerts, opening the year 2002 with series of cultural exchanges for educators and high school students, the general public and music lovers. The program includes Beethoven's Romance No. 2, two pieces by National Artist Lucrecia Kasilag ("Intermezzo" and "Variations on Bahay Kubo" and Sonatas for Violin and Piano by Brahms No. 1 in G major and Grieg No. 3 in C Minor). Their schedule: Paco Park (Jan. 4), Heritage House of Odette Alcantara (Jan. 5), National Arts Center (Jan. 6), Adventist University of the Philippines (Jan. 7) and Sta. Isabel College (Jan. 9).

Canada-based Filipina soprano Eleonor Calbes e-mailed us about her successful Christmas concert at the Rexdale Alliance Christian Church in Toronto. She and husband Jack leave today for California to do their traditional cross-country drive. Calbes might yet open the 3rd Cagayan Valley International Music Festival in Cagayan late this year. She is a native of Tuguegarao City.



SOPRANO Rachelle Gerodias with the Crosswave Symphony under Chino Toledo



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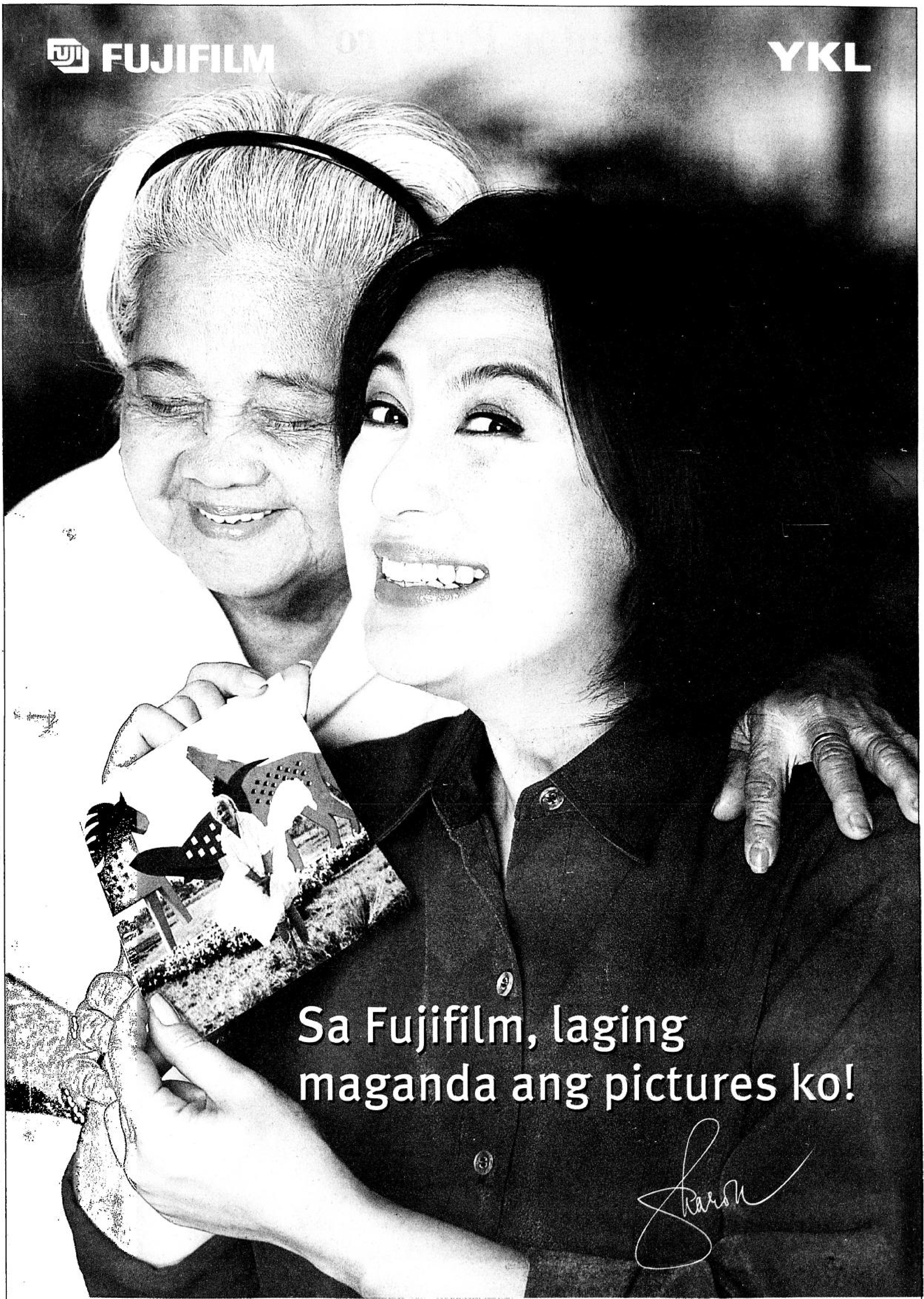

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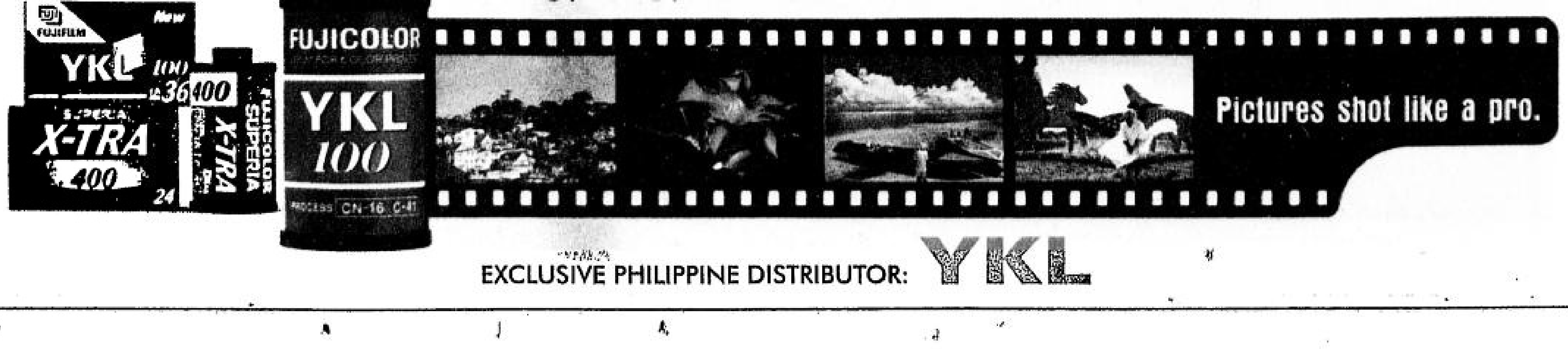

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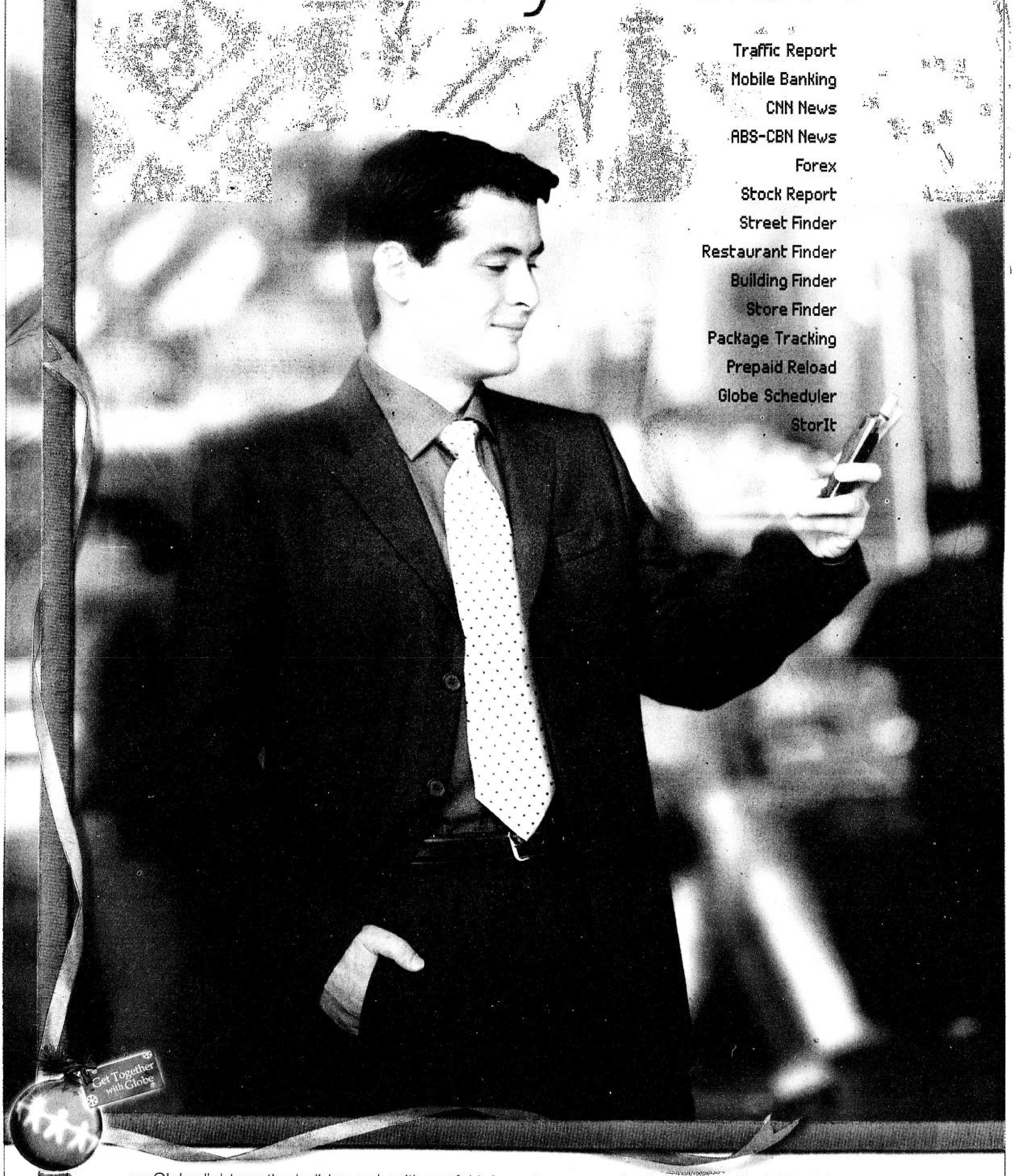

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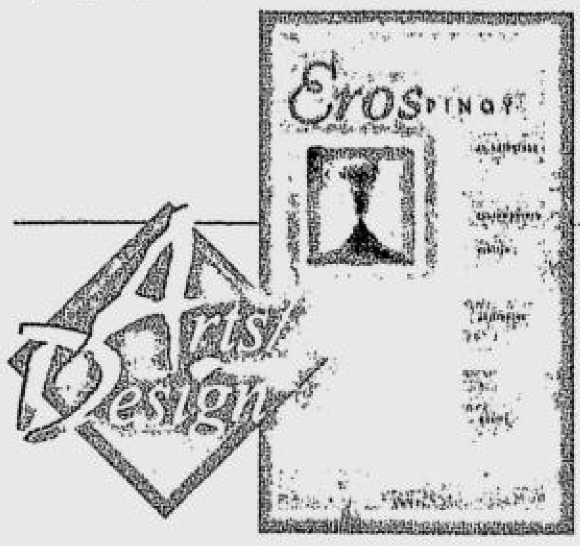

Book of Pinoy erotica is a sensual feast

Story on page G2

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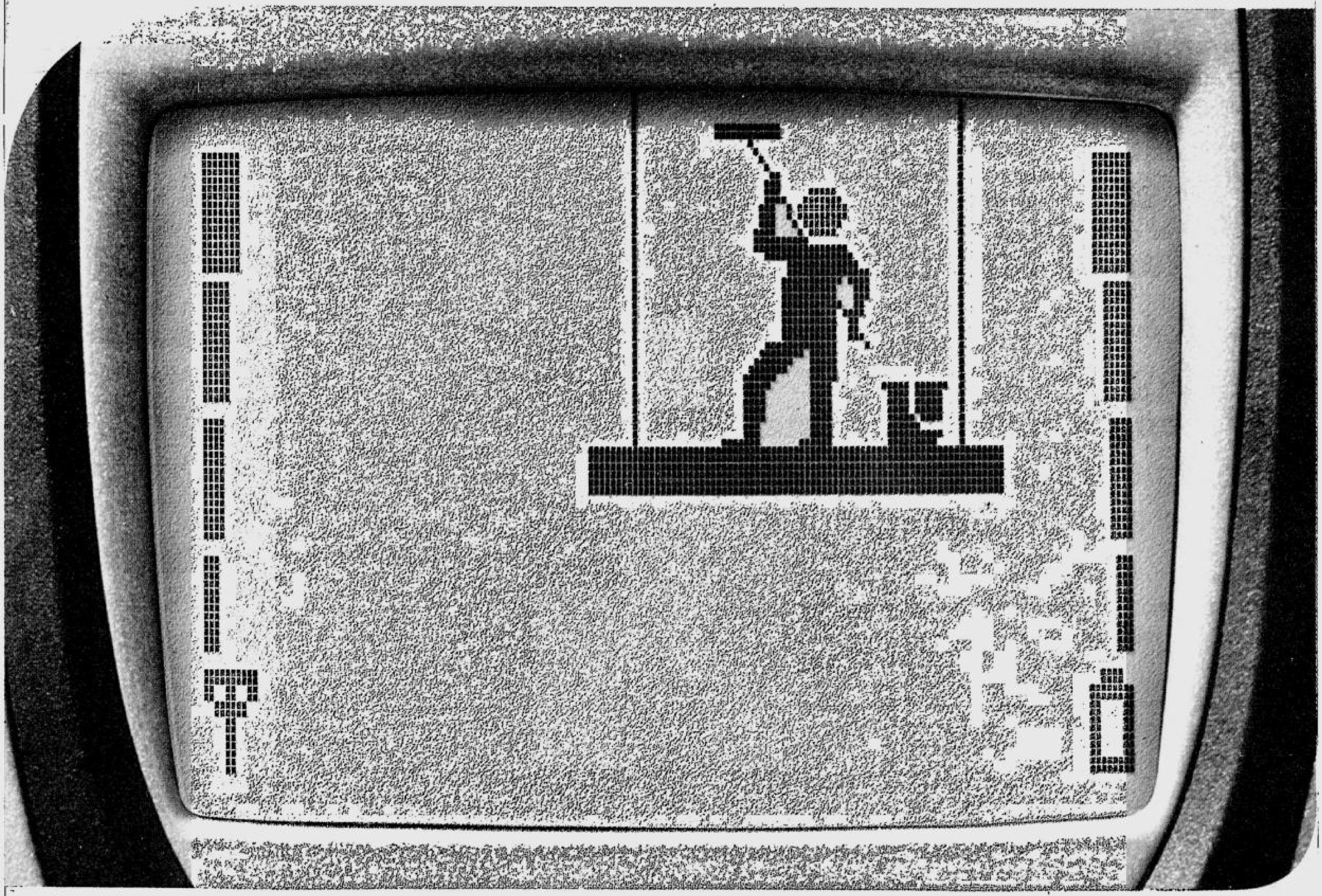

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Book of Pinoy erotica is a sensual feast

Eros Pinoy, An Anthology on Contemporary Erotica in Philippine Art and Poetry
Anvil, Manila, 2001
138 pages

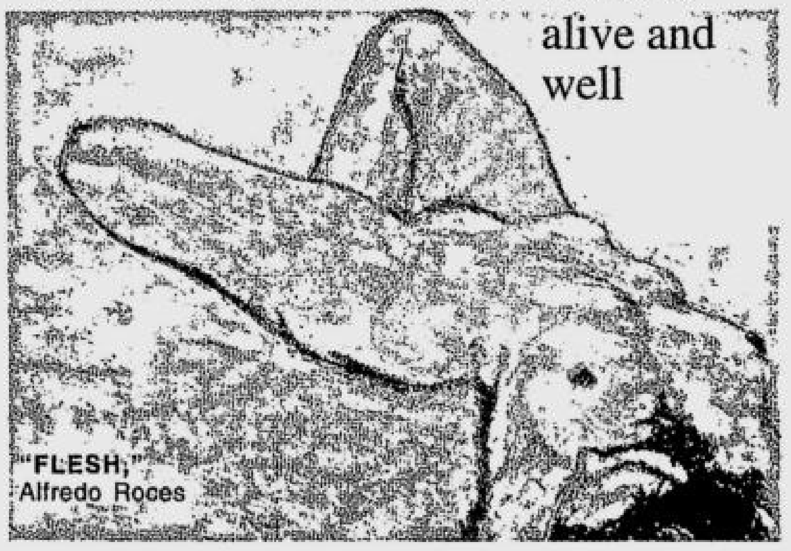
By Ophelia A. Dimalanta
Contributor

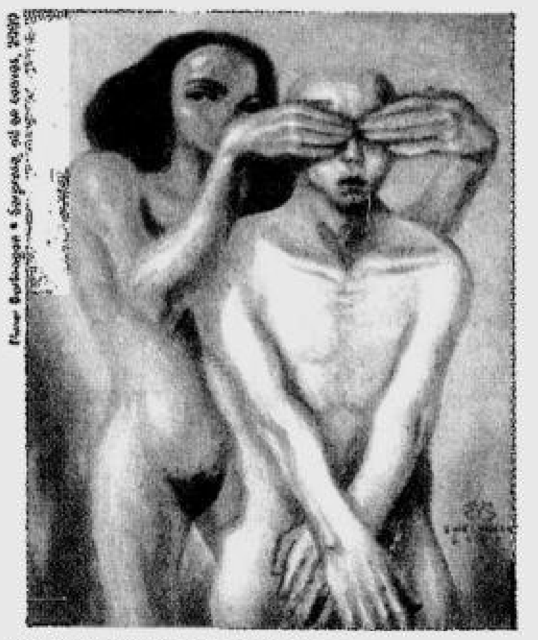
An artistic convergence of literary and visual artists, including poets with all too respectable reputations and those too young to have dirty thoughts, shows that the Filipino libido is alive and well

REVIEW

"EROS Pinoy" appears smack at a time when the world is becoming increasingly undisciplined and loose, morally indifferent if not altogether devious. It has become widely accepted that the sex drive lies at the base of every reality (the Freudian influence has not entirely dissipated), never found alone and in isolation in human beings but nearly always associated even with aesthetic, imaginative considerations. Sex is virtually out in the open, and chastity has become a virtue we have forgotten exists. BBC director general Hugh Carleton Greene believes that this frank and open attitude to sex is really the key to human happiness. Now, with sex being flaunted in the most open form and manner, in public places, billboards, TV ads and shows, movies, has the world indeed become happier? What about the increase in the crime rate? What about suicides, mental illness, violence?

"Eros Pinoy" is arguably a sensual feast, exploring erotic experiences in art and literature. But what does eroticism mean, really? Here is a word whose meaning and implications one definition cannot exhaust adequately. I used to come up with a tongue-in-cheek definition like sophisticated obscenity (not to be taken seriously). The erotic is not only to be taken in its narrow sexual connotation, but in a more general sense, indicating broadly physical, sensual desire and a passionate romantic relationship with, affection for, or attachment to another person. Erotic art tends to focus on the more physical aspects of love and passion.


"FLESH," Alfredo Roces


"SOPRESA," Elmer Borlongan

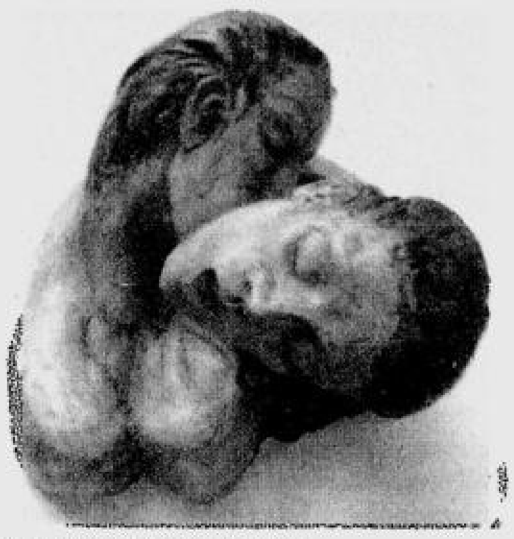
"Eros Pinoy" tries to define and express this sexual/sensual drive in its intention to renurture the inner secrets of our erotic nature, Pinoy style. Has this been adequately expressed in this handsomely packaged and quite expensive book edited by Virgilio Aviado, Ben Cabrera, Alfred Yuson, book design by Ramon Sunico, all four well respected in the field of the visual and literary arts?

Stunning contribution

The names of the artist-contributors stun, already a selling point for the book. In the visual arts, we are made to have glimpses of the well-known expertise of Abad, National Artist Abueva, Antonio, Arellano, Austria, Bolipata, Bose, Bencab, Castrillo, Dalena, Lluch, National Artist Luz, National Artist Elizalde-Navarro, Olmedo, Orlina, Roces, Sanso, photo-artists Javier, Tysmans, etc. The media and method employed are interestingly varied: hand-tinted digital colorprint, oil in paper and canvas, drawings from sketchbooks, etchings on brass, lithography print, watercolor, colored pencil on paper, inkbrush on paper, colored and black and white photos, colored pencil on paper, inkjet copies, pastel on paper, surely a visual smorgasbord ranging from the delightfully, sullenly erotic to the downright risqué, sometimes even bordering on the vulgar especially in photographs where the effect on the beholder is more immediate and direct, unlike the art works where contours are artistically refined, obscured at times by the surreal and the impressionistic.

Subjects revolve around sexual love and passion, focusing on nudity (female, and surprisingly, male), copulation, cunnilingus, masturbation, sexual encounters of all kinds, gay, lesbian, love in all its manifestations, lust, pathos bordering on the ludicrous, post-coital calm, gender power, genital flaunt and possession, the female form in its grace and giving power, the male form virile and empowering, touch the ultimate nexus, the experience of love and desire in a motley of voices and positions. The appeal of eroticism comes through effectively in the art of the more seasoned. The other attempts are pure dilettantism.

And one perhaps would wish for a Botticelli's Birth of Venus (the ultimate in eroticism in art), or a Bronzino's Allegory. Classic and forever contemporary. But this is unfair to ask from an anthology with its essential constraints.


"AMOR Brujo," Julie Lluch

Confluence of talents

It is, admittedly, a brilliant confluence of talents; and more brilliant the very scheme of putting together the visual and the literary arts unified by a theme, erotic love no less, erotic love, more or less. After all, love takes shape out of the imagination, and the erotic imagination is created by art.

Major poets Abad, Bautista and National Artist Edith Tiempo certainly are quite out of place here. Edith's "Hairbreadth: A Love Story" is an extremely charming love poem, but hardly erotic at all. And National Artist Franz! His is also an exquisite love poem, but erotic? And the youngest poet, Angelo Suarez, who in his green years could not yet possibly work up a sexual frenzy, let alone stoke enough fire to spark erotic lines along the standards of Yuson and Co.? Daoana, Gulle and Maniquiz perhaps, but their contributions to the anthology are still love poems, merely. Remoto, well, this one certainly fits snugly in. Add to the list of the not-quite-capable-of-tickling-the-erotic-nerve-into-poetry poets, to my mind, poets Ruel de Vera, Alice Sun-Cua. And Wanggo, oh boy, not yet. Krip Yuson is one poet whose craft can turn even "smells down there" into poetic effluvia inspiring erotic poetry of the most unsettling kind. Movie director Peque Gallaga is a poetic revelation. But erotic? Never mind. Eric Gamalinda as ever picks his sensual punches well. Ricardo de Ungria's poetry is the erotic one in the best sense. I enjoyed Jaime An Lim's poetic itinerary of the tongue as traveler *exotique*. The other women poets are perhaps the ones more at home in the erotic, timid enough to withhold just so much, intimidated enough by the demands of art, and bold enough to express authentic female experience on and about sex.

Immanent desire

Sensuality in poetry (which is basic to erotica) is not merely rhapsodizing over female or male anatomy, or over sexual intercourse; it takes many forms and may manifest even in the most unexpected situations and details, hand it to the expert. Erotic desire may even be immanent in all areas of the imagination, including theology.

Has the book expressed an erotica that is Pinoy enough? Not totally so, for no book can for that matter. One's personal erotica is just that, too personal, held quite private and secret

BOOK/ p. G3

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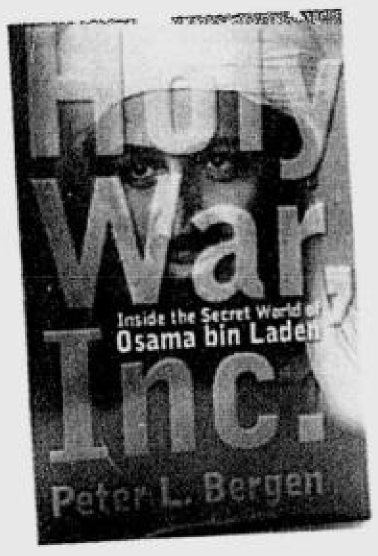
Holiday reading from National

TAKE a closer look at the man behind the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon with "Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden." Authored by CNN terrorism analyst Peter Bergen, one of the few Western journalists who had interviewed the world's most wanted man face-to-face, the book is an inside look at the Jihadist network based on the author's four years of investigative reporting. It reveals how Bin Laden lives, travels and communicates with his "cells" and how his role in the crushing defeat of the Soviet Union has made him a hero to Muslims all over the world.



Those who want some leisurely holiday reading can check out Johanna Lindsey's "Home for the Holidays," a romance novel about a man enraptured by a woman who despises him and how these two rival souls find forgiveness, tenderness and love through the magic of the Christmas season.

Other fiction titles include "Daughter of Fortune" and "Portrait in Sepia," both by noted author Isabel Allende. "Daughter of Fortune" tells the story of an orphan girl, Eliza Somers, raised in Valparaiso, Chile by a Victorian spinster and her rigid broker.

"Portrait of Sepia" is a novel about memos and family secrets. Aurora del Valle suffers a brutal trauma that shapes her character and erases from her mind all the recollection of the first five years of her life.

There are books for those who want to divert from typical happy endings. Books 1 to 7 of "Unfortunate Events" by Lemony Snicket tells the stories of three Baudelaire orphans and their desperate attempts to escape evil plans of their Uncle Olaf.

Fans of the best-selling author of "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus," John Gray, can get a hold of his newest book, "How to Live for Change and Change for Life: Practical Ways to Have the Life You Want." The book tackles love and relationships and explains the amazing benefits of committing to change and returning to what's important in order to create a life of lasting love, health and happiness.

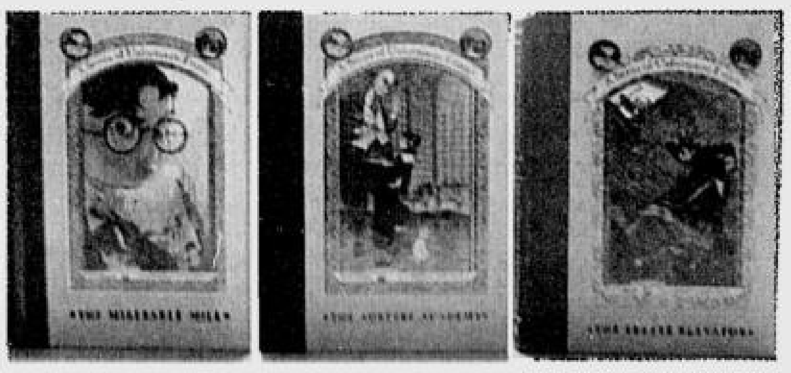
If...
Questions for
Teens

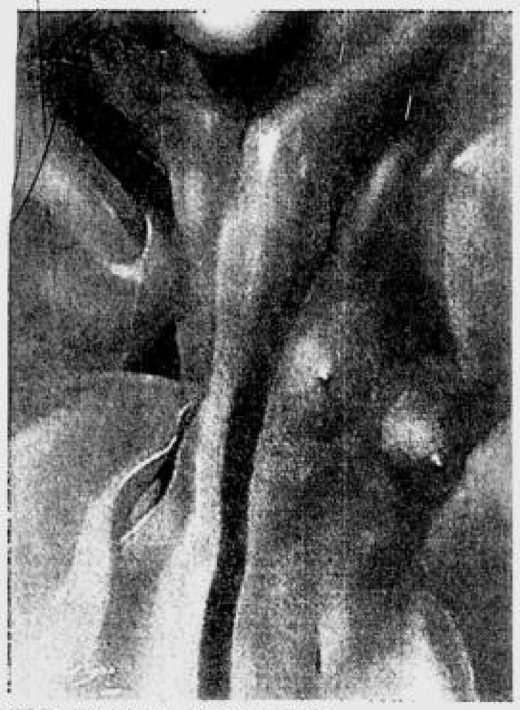
Those who want improvement at the office can take Buddha's philosophy and apply it to the modern workplace with Franz Metcalf and BJ Gallagher Hateley's "What Would Buddha Do at Work?: 101 Answers to Workplace Dilemmas."

Teens can have a great time with "If... Questions for Teens" by Evelyn McFarlane and James Saywell. A book, a game or even a journal, it asks questions that can help readers get to know themselves or their friends better.

A great book to pick up new ideas on table settings just in time for *noche buena*, "Lamesa: The Filipino Table" by Reynaldo Alejandro and Josephine Hermano," shows a collection of tables and tablescapes featuring accoutrements dating back to ancestral traditions redone in contemporary lifestyles.

All books are available at National Bookstore branches nationwide.





"ORBEROS," Justin Nuyda

Book of Pinoy erotica is a sensual feast

(From page G2)

and inexpressible, and in art already refined, repressed, modulated. But Pinoy enough, the swinging from one extreme to the other, from the explicit to the gaps and ruptures of repressive text, from the downright vulgar to the subtly evasive. This makes the book a pleasurable, curious perusal. Some pictures are truly titillating, even to the searching voyeuristic eye out for kicks. Some are sensual encounters in the best aesthetic sense. Poetry is a stimulating mix. Certainly the love poems which, come to think, could be all of them with erotica sprinkled sparsely here and there and laid on thick at some points.

Nonetheless, perfect for company this cold December nights.

But somehow, one couldn't help wishing for that kind of erotica that makes that strange subtle leap from the erotic to faith, with the erotic flesh in both literature and art becoming the saving enduring word.

The triumph of popular culture

Sa loob at labas ng mall kong sawi/
Kaliluha'y siyang nangyayaring hari:
Ang Pagkatuto at Pagtatanghal ng
Kulturang Popular
Roland B. Tolentino
University of the Philippines Press
Quezon City, 2001
232 pages

BY ROMULO P. BAQUIRAN JR.
Contributor

REVIEW

"POPULAR culture has come of age," says critic-scholar Roland B. Tolentino. "It has infiltrated every aspect of our lives—from the choice of the food we eat, the way we feel, the way we love, in fact how we construct our identity as individuals."

In his latest book, "Ang Pagkatuto at Pagtatanghal ng Kulturang Popular," Tolentino discusses in detail how popular culture as a postmodern phenomenon is manifested in Filipino culture. The 14 essays show in detail the inner workings of such "culturally loaded" Filipino behavior like the mad rush for skin whiteners, the touching of the Virgin of Peñafrancia and South Border's Brix, and the insatiable malling of dwellers in the major cities.

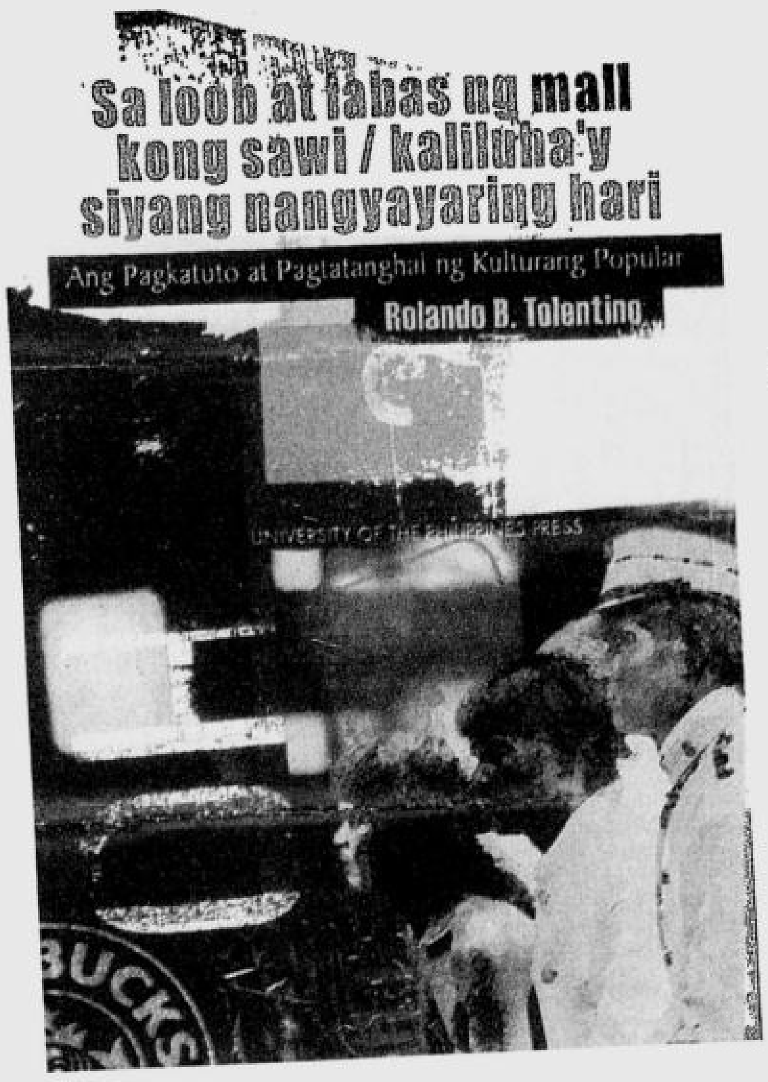
Tolentino also examines the political, historical and social significance of a wide range of issues from drug trafficking to translation, death penalty, censorship, video games, subcontracting and man-made disasters. He writes very engagingly, albeit in scholarly jargon. The subject and method call for it, so readers must be patient enough to grapple with the initial difficulty before encountering in most of the pieces the innovative insights on the changing terrain of Filipino identity. We can call these Tolentino's eclectic post-colonial revelations, or globalization intutions.

Intertextual

Take the essay "Malling, Subcontracting at Serbisyong Ekonomiya sa SM" which does not focus only on the topics identified in the title but traverses through a mesh of seemingly unconnected events. It starts off with Leo Echagaray, segues into the primacy of the visual, then the mass production of the Sto. Niño, the phallus adornments of pre-Hispanic Filipinos and into the symbol of Rizal as the ecstasy for nationhood. Finally the essay goes into an excoriation of the Shoemart phenomenon. (Henry Sy himself unwittingly funded the writing of the essay through a UP Professorial Chair grant). It seemed a tenuous project, but Tolentino pulls it off by presenting the piece as a model of postmodern thinking and view of contemporary cultural phenomena.

One can see deconstruction at work here—the mimetic no longer functions as the monolithic method of looking at the world. Past and present are juxtaposed or superimposed onto one another. A bricolage of historic and contemporary events, of foreign and native spaces is presented. Every event can be used in this mode of mix-and-match textuality.

In "Paghahanap ng Manunulat sa Sariling Tinig," Tolentino weaves a reading of the primacy of the aural and the visual in mythic and popular texts. He contrasts at length the ethos of Darna and Superman, an inspired reading that puts our favorite superheroes in a whole new light, of course with a bias for the local sexy one. Darna's mantra is interpreted as an expression of the subaltern for social change or action. In the end, the whole discussion is condensed as a parable for the Filipino writer, on how s/he can make his/her voice relevant today.



Global and native

The book's themes play around the inroads of global trends into the native consciousness and how individual/national identities react and reform. Transnational profit is the overriding impetus of the relentless mass media bombardment of infotainment upon millions of Filipinos. And our behavior is thus conditioned to become "global." So we see our teenagers becoming the most fashionable in Asia. But not everyone has the ability to acquire Levi's or Guess to be "in." And how does the "financially challenged" adapt? By buying fake items. Tolentino calls this behavior a form of "sadomasochism." He makes familiar terms that can aid readers navigate the popular culture labyrinth.

On the whole, Tolentino gives a new perspective on the formation of Filipino identities vis-à-vis the growing hypermedia environment. A good message one gets from the essays is a transformative vision—that despite the massive inputs and influence from foreign sources, the power of the Filipino individual as an agency of change remains, and hopefully stays so for the foreseeable future. A young nephew maybe playing video games that depict violence, yet he never loses his sense of his good self, of sportsmanship and goodwill toward his playmates. At least in the contemporary phase of technology and popular culture, individuals still know how to distinguish the real from the virtual.

By reading Tolentino's book, readers will realize this age is indeed very complex one. Good news, he offers as well articulate examinations of this phenomenon.

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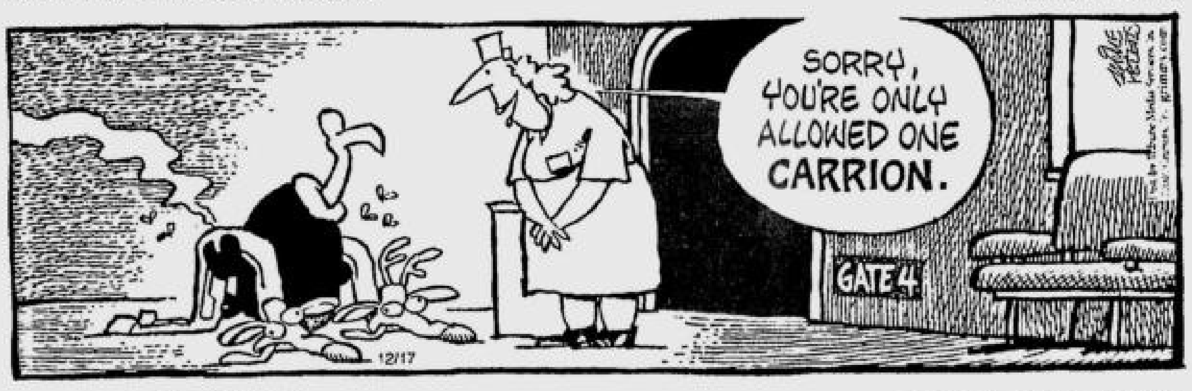
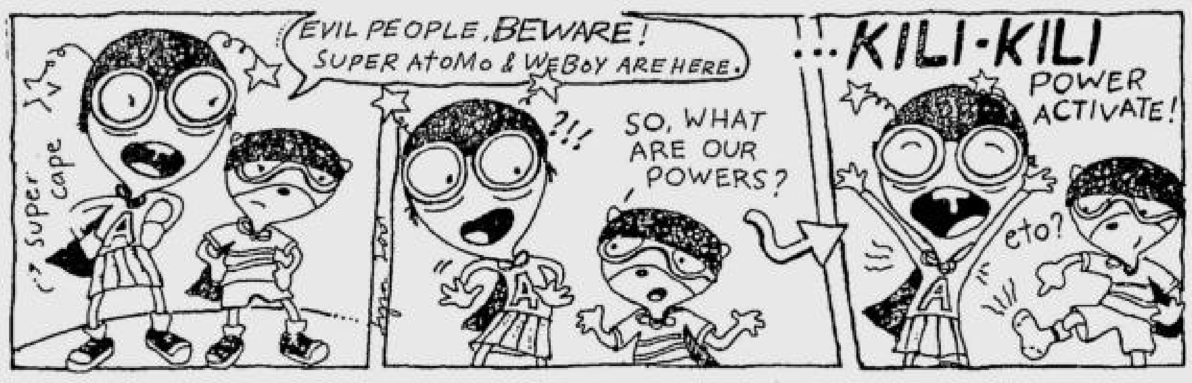
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SORRY, YOU'RE ONLY ALLOWED ONE CARRION.
GATE 4
12/17

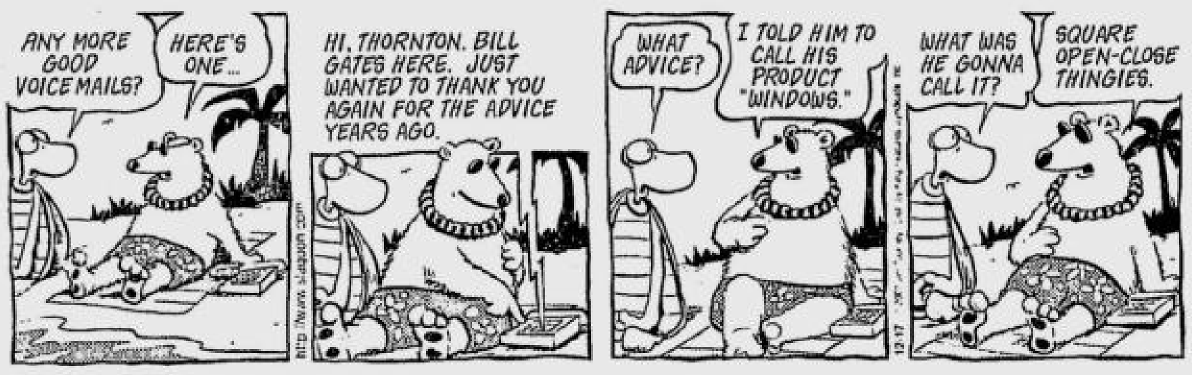
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


EVIL PEOPLE, BEWARE! SUPER AtoMo & WeBoy ARE HERE.
super cape
?!!
SO, WHAT ARE OUR POWERS?
...KILI-KILI POWER ACTIVATE!
eto?

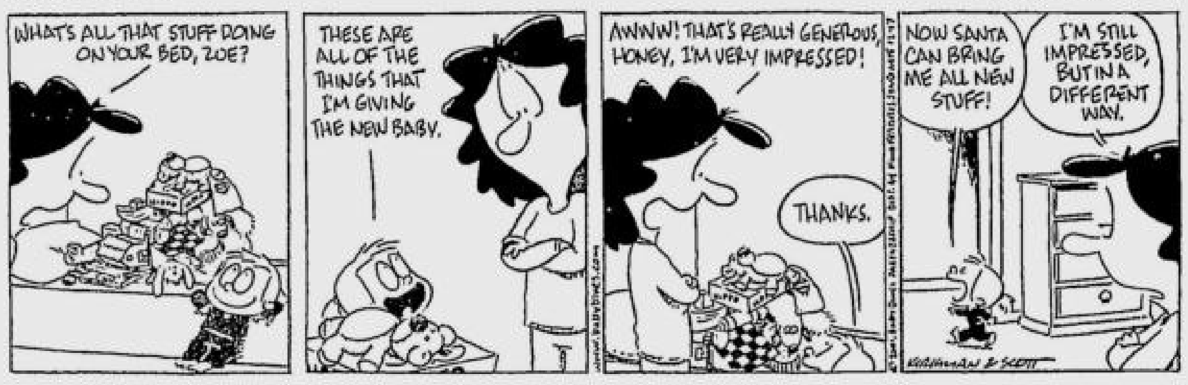
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ANY MORE GOOD VOICE MAILS?
HERE'S ONE...
HI, THORNTON. BILL GATES HERE. JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU AGAIN FOR THE ADVICE YEARS AGO.
WHAT ADVICE?
I TOLD HIM TO CALL HIS PRODUCT "WINDOWS."
WHAT WAS HE GONNA CALL IT?
SQUARE OPEN-CLOSE THINGIES.
12-17

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S ALL THAT STUFF DOING ON YOUR BED, ZOE?
THESE ARE ALL OF THE THINGS THAT I'M GIVING THE NEW BABY.
AWWW! THAT'S REALLY GENEROUS, HONEY, I'M VERY IMPRESSED!
THANKS.
NOW SANTA CAN BRING ME ALL NEW STUFF!
I'M STILL IMPRESSED, BUT IN A DIFFERENT WAY.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Bob Guccione, Eugene Levy, Eric Brown, Vanessa Zima

Happy Birthday: You can be very powerful when it comes to getting others interested in your ideas. Presentations will go according to plan and financial gains can be made. All you have to do is follow through with what you know will work. Your numbers are 15, 20, 22, 27, 31, 45

ARIES (March 21-April 19): It's time to do something that you can be proud of. You will develop lasting friendships if you get involved in fund-raising events and creative endeavors.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You will have to learn to stand on your own two feet. Someone may have wanted you to depend on him or her in order to stop you from developing your own life.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You need to expand your mind in order to move forward. Look toward activities that will make you think and stimulate your senses.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let threatening events ruin your day. Take any precautions necessary but don't stop doing the things you enjoy. Secure your financial situation by making long-term investments that won't present you with uncertainties and worry.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Make a decision regarding what you want to do in your personal life. You shouldn't lead someone on. Your intentions must be honorable or you stand to ruin your reputation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't take chances today. Watch what you consume and don't speed when driving. Put your efforts into career objectives.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You have more going for you than you give yourself credit for. A good budget will help you clear up past debts.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Be prepared to go full tilt without a break and little sleep today. Entertaining in your home will go better than you anticipated.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You may want to head to the mall for last-minute shopping but be careful while driving. Keep surprises well hidden; curious loved ones will try to figure out what you've bought.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You will be inclined to spend more than usual so try to limit yourself. Time spent with family will be more important than how much you spend on them.

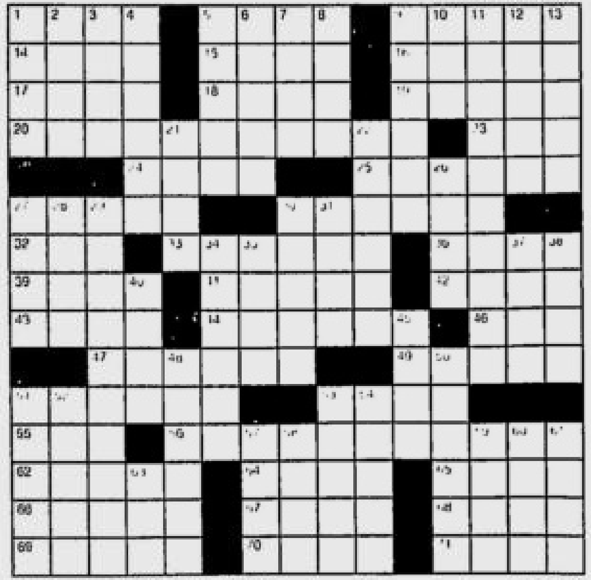
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You should be thinking about clearing up any last-minute paperwork that needs to be taken care of before year end. Look to the future with positive ideas.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your memory will play tricks on you as you reflect on the year gone by. Don't rewrite history. Face up to the mistakes you made.

Birthday Baby: You are a master when it comes to getting what you want. You are persuasive, persistent and ambitious and were born with deep insight and a strong sense of what will work and what won't.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Linda and Arlan Bushman
Chicago, IL

11/1/01

ACROSS
1 Instructions unit
5 Loony
9 Did the lawn
14 Exhort
15 Kareem's alma mater
16 One Astaire
17 Equips
18 Essential point
19 Museum piece
20 Treat a group
23 Euchre variant
24 Sets (down)
25 Fourscore
27 Traveler's inn
30 Skinflint
32 "Don't Bring Me Down" grp.
33 Subterranean formation
36 Verne's captain
39 Welsh national emblem
41 Lading
42 Substantial chunk
43 Lug about
44 Alliances
46 Freudian concept
47 Hard hat
49 Actress MacDowell
51 Yurt's cousin
53 Trendy fashion
55 Tin Man's cure-all
56 Somewhat mired by
62 So long, senor!
64 Aperture
65 Casino toss
66 Have a hunch about
67 Quickly, shortly
68 Son of Seth
69 Long lock
70 Ensuing
71 Body-shop concern

DOWN
1 Click away on the Net
2 The Police or Green Day, e.g.
3 Trademark waffle
4 Clublike tool
5 Certain nobleman's domain
6 Lots of land
7 Muff
8 Hack
9 Florida fielder
10 Keatsian work
11 Rolling in dough
12 "Middlemarch" author
13 Hunter's lure
21 Soapstone, mostly
22 Use for support
26 Cotton cleaners
27 Run in the heat?
28 Bread spread
29 Behave appropriately
30 Be worthy of
31 Consequently
34 Keen perception
35 Fan blade
37 Wise Men
38 Orchestral reed
40 Take care of
45 Common herb
48 Rental agreements
50 Lacked
51 L'chaim or prosit
52 Bedding down
53 Take a load off
54 Very skilled
57 Genghis __
58 Go down in defeat
59 Knotty __
60 Screen symbol
61 Fit closely inside
63 Forerunner of the CIA

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

B	L	I	M	P	■	S	A	S	S	■	A	P	S	E
E	A	G	E	R	■	A	N	N	E	■	D	E	A	D
E	R	O	D	E	■	L	O	O	T	■	S	N	U	G
P	A	R	A	F	F	I	N	W	A	X	■	A	T	E
■	■	■	L	E	I	S	■	S	T	I	F	L	E	S
A	S	P	■	R	E	B	A	■	R	I	O	T	■	■
G	I	R	L	S	■	U	L	N	A	■	L	Y	R	E
E	R	I	E	■	D	R	O	O	P	■	I	B	I	S
S	E	C	T	■	E	Y	E	R	■	G	O	O	N	S
■	■	E	O	N	S	■	S	T	O	A	■	X	K	E
S	H	I	N	I	E	R	■	H	U	S	H	■	■	■
P	A	N	■	P	R	O	P	E	R	T	Y	T	A	X
O	L	D	S	■	T	U	N	A	■	R	E	H	E	M
O	L	E	G	■	E	G	I	S	■	I	N	U	R	E
N	E	X	T	■	R	E	N	T	■	C	A	R	O	N

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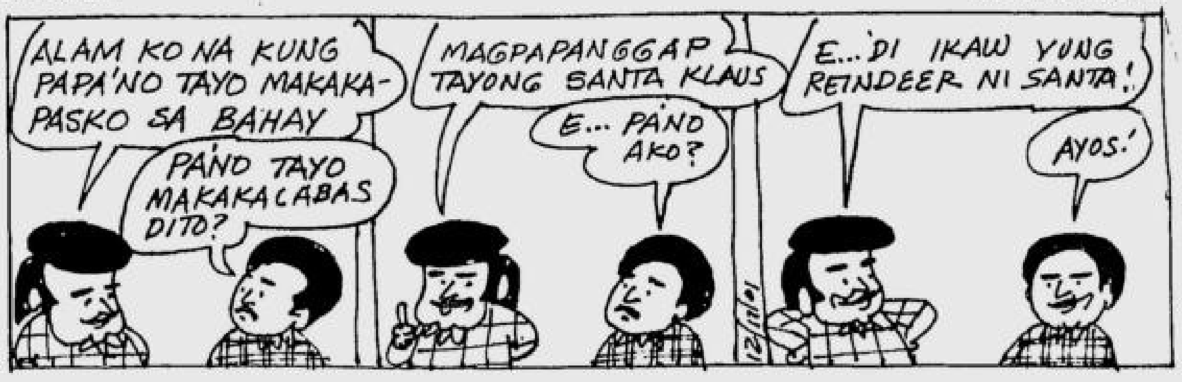
11/1/01

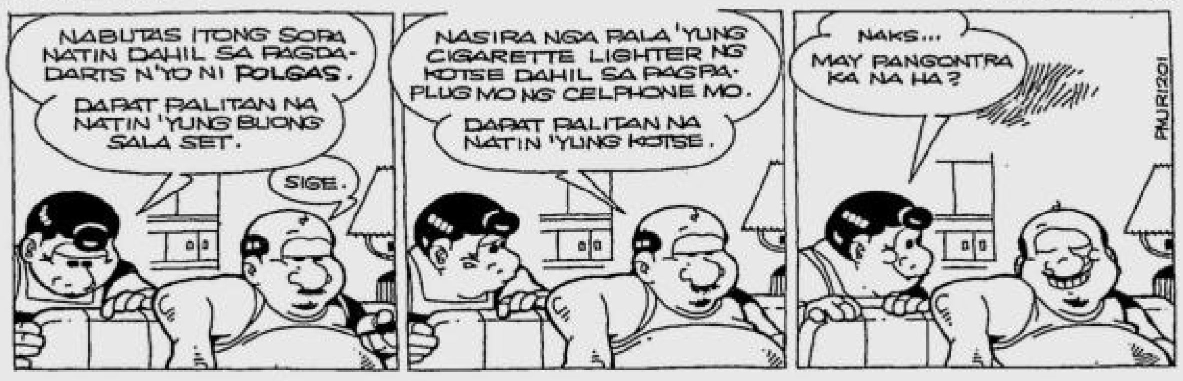
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ALAM KO NA KUNG PAPA'NO TAYO MAKAKA-PASKO SA BAHAY
PA'NO TAYO MAKAKALABAS DITO?
MAGPAPANGGAP TAYONG SANTA KLAUS
E... PA'NO AKO?
E...'DI IKAW YUNG REINDEER NI SANTA!
AYOS!
12/10/01

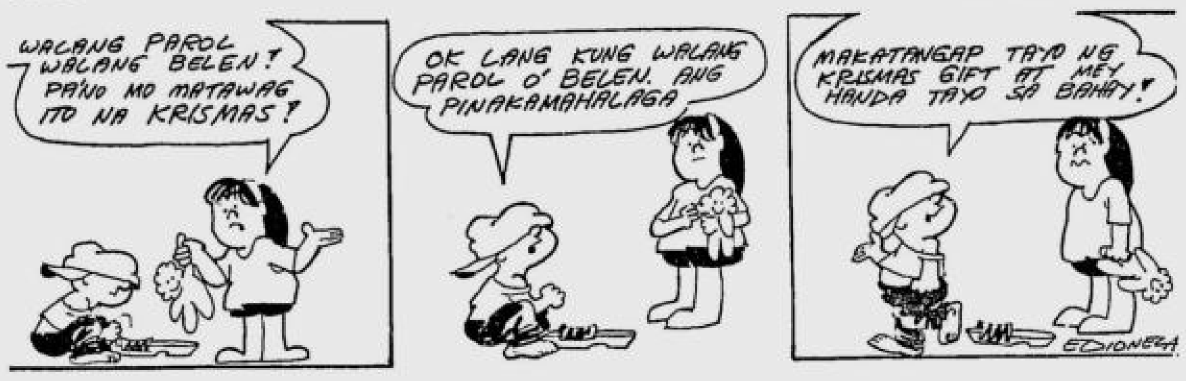
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NABUTAS ITONG SOPA NATIN DAHIL SA PAGDA-DARTS N'YO NI POLGAS.
DAPAT PALITAN NA NATIN 'YUNG BUONG SALA SET.
SIGE.
NASIRA NGA PALA 'YUNG CIGARETTE LIGHTER NG KOTSE DAHIL SA PAGPA-PLUG MO NG CELPHONE MO.
DAPAT PALITAN NA NATIN 'YUNG KOTSE.
NAKS... MAY PANGONTRA KA NA HA?
PMJR1201

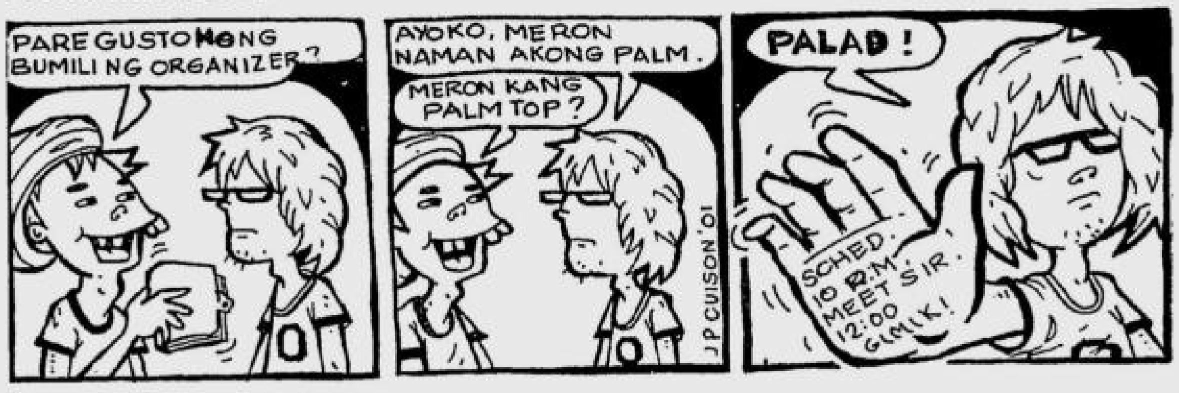
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


WALANG PAROL WALANG BELEN! PA'NO MO MATAWAG ITO NA KRISMAS!
OK LANG KUNG WALANG PAROL O' BELEN. ANG PINAKAMAHALAGA
MAKATANGAP TAYO NG KRISMAS GIFT AT MEY HANDA TAYO SA BAHAY!
EDIONELA

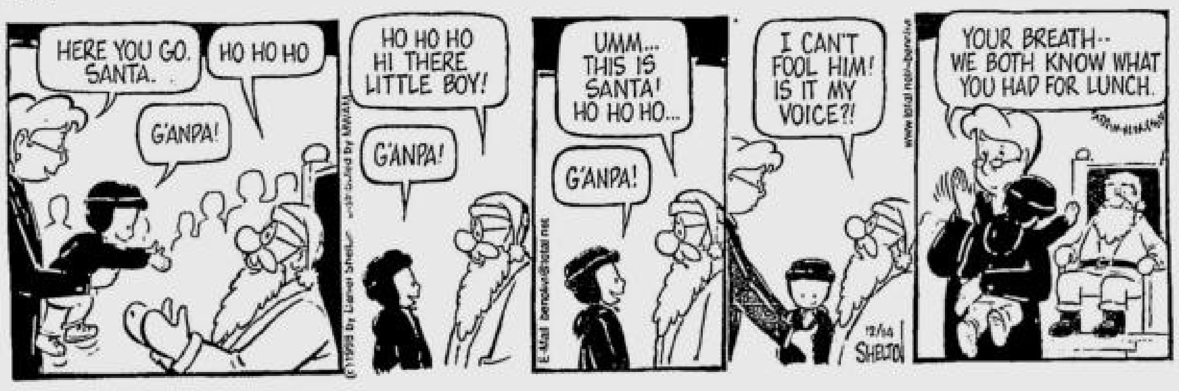
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


PARE GUSTO MONG BUMILI NG ORGANIZER?
AYOKO, MERON NAMAN AKONG PALM.
MERON KANG PALM TOP?
PALAD!
SCHED. 10 P.M. MEET SIR. 12:00 GIMIK!
J.P. CUISON '01

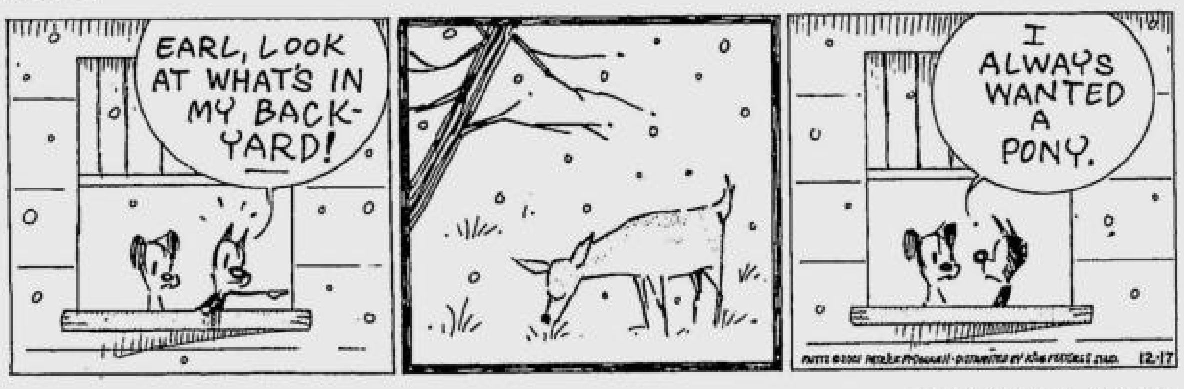
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HERE YOU GO, SANTA.
HO HO HO
G'ANPA!
HO HO HO HI THERE LITTLE BOY!
G'ANPA!
UMM... THIS IS SANTA! HO HO HO...
G'ANPA!
I CAN'T FOOL HIM! IS IT MY VOICE?!
YOUR BREATH-- WE BOTH KNOW WHAT YOU HAD FOR LUNCH.
SHELTON

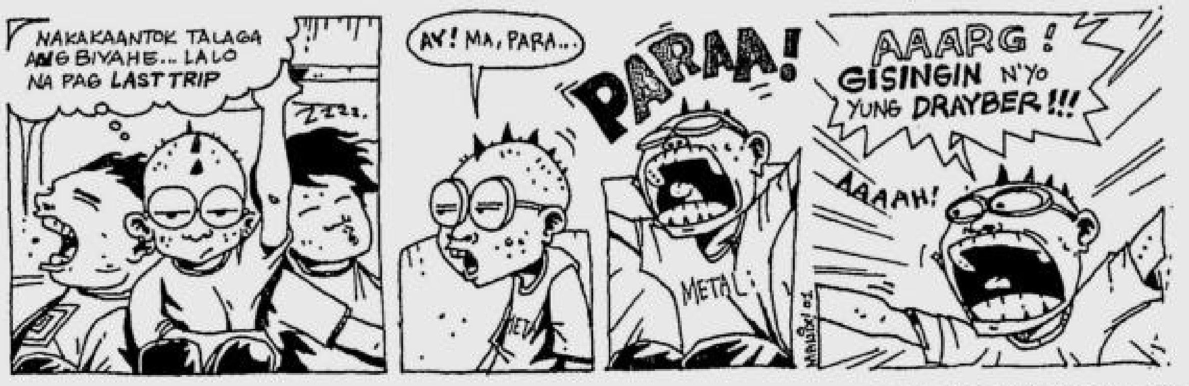
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL, LOOK AT WHAT'S IN MY BACK-YARD!
I ALWAYS WANTED A PONY.
12-17

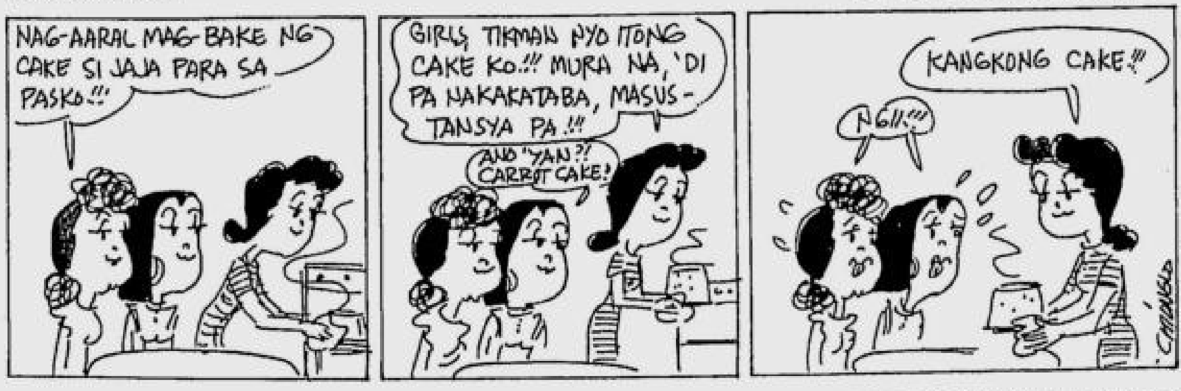
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANUEL ABRERA


NAKAKAANTOK TALAGA ANG BIYAHE... LALO NA PAG LAST TRIP
Z-Z-Z.
AY! MA, PARA...
PARAA!
AAARG! GISINGIN N'YO YUNG DRAYBER!!!
AAAAH!
METAL

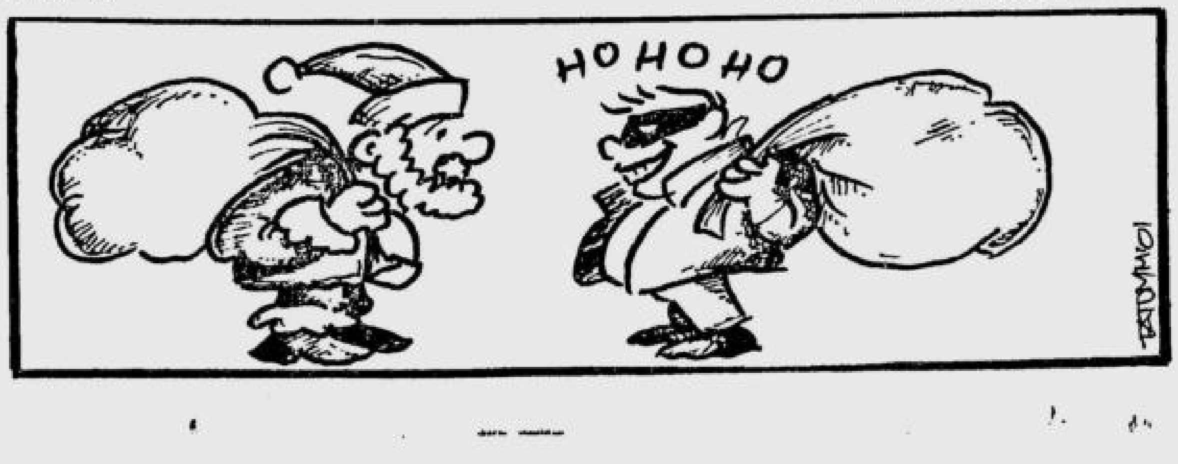
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

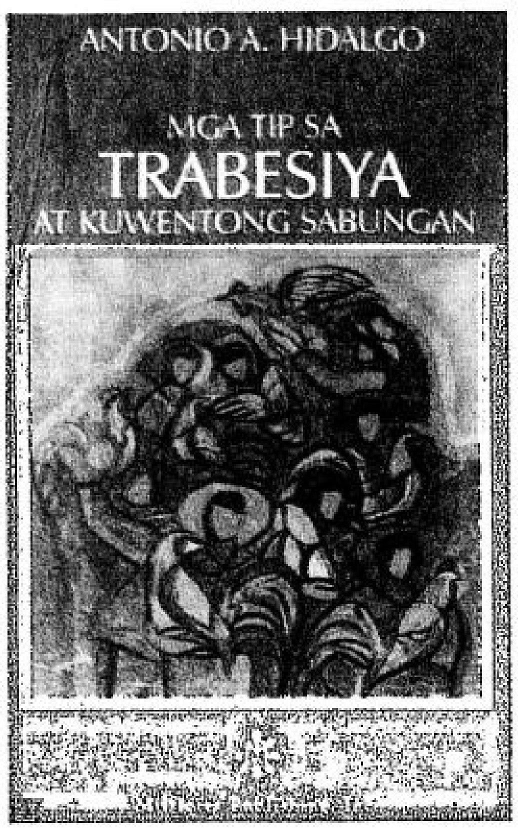

NAG-AARAL MAG-BAKE NG CAKE SI JAJA PARA SA PASKO!!!
GIRLS, TIKMAN N'YO ITONG CAKE KO!!! MURA NA, 'DI PA NAKAKATABA, MASUSTANSYA PA!!!
ANO 'YAN?! CARROT CAKE!
KANGKONG CAKE!!!
NGII!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


HO HO HO
BATUMAN01

Hidalgo completes book series on cockfighting



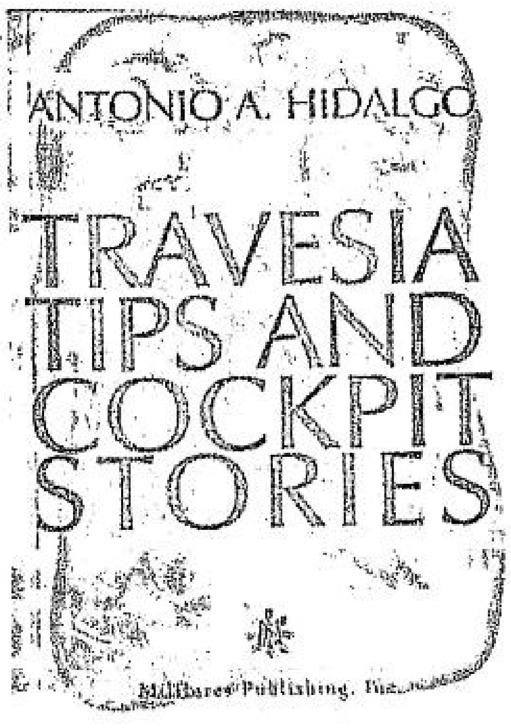
MILFLORES Publishing Inc. has recently released the final two volumes in the nine-volume series of books on cockfighting by Antonio A. Hidalgo.

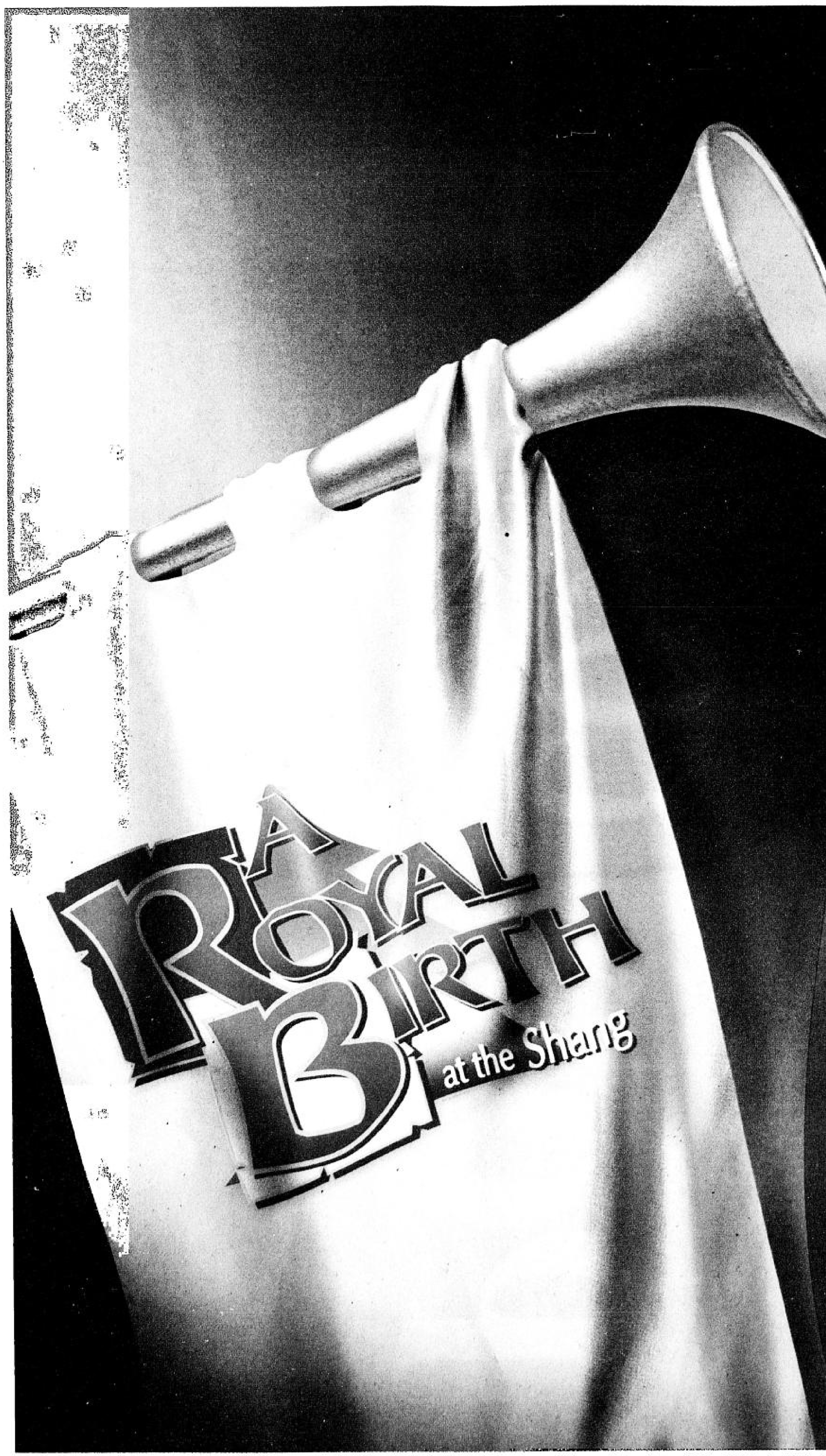
In "Travesia Tips and Cockpit Stories," and its translation into Filipino, "Mga Tip sa Trabesiya at Kuwentong Sabungan," Hidalgo shares his knowledge of, and lifelong experience in, travesia—the art of betting on cockfights. He documents travesia practices and conventions for the beginner—from the range of betting odds or *logro*, and the hand signals used to signify them, to the functions of prestos. He also shares his insightful betting strategies with the experienced bettor—strategies that are based on selecting winning cocks, discovering winning patterns, or *reglas*, and managing funds.

The two books also contain six hilarious and ironic short stories revolving around the wacky central character of Nestor Divinagracia, the world's unique cocker. They are a sequel to the best-selling series of six Nestor stories in "Cockfighting Secrets," and its Filipino translation, "Mga Sekreto sa Pagsasabong." These stories have entered the popular culture in the cockpits and are among the best-read fiction in the country today.

In his remarkable series of cockfighting books, Hidalgo has written on all the rotator facets of our national game by using both analytical and creative styles. He has systematically analyzed the best techniques for breeding, selecting, conditioning, matching and heeling fighting cocks by using the latest concepts in the natural and social sciences. He has also explored *sabong's* hidden magical and psychological contours through fiction. "Travesia Tips and Cockpit Stories" and "Mga Tip sa Trabesiya at Kuwentong Sabungan" are fitting final volumes in the nine-book series that Hidalgo started in 1992 and completed nine years later with the collaboration of Manuel D. Baldemor as cover designer and illustrator.

The two books are available at all National Bookstore, PowerBooks, Bibliarch and Goodwill stores, and selected poultry supply stores at P190 per copy for the English version and P140 per copy for the Filipino version.





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SINILANG NA!: A CHRISTMAS CONCERT
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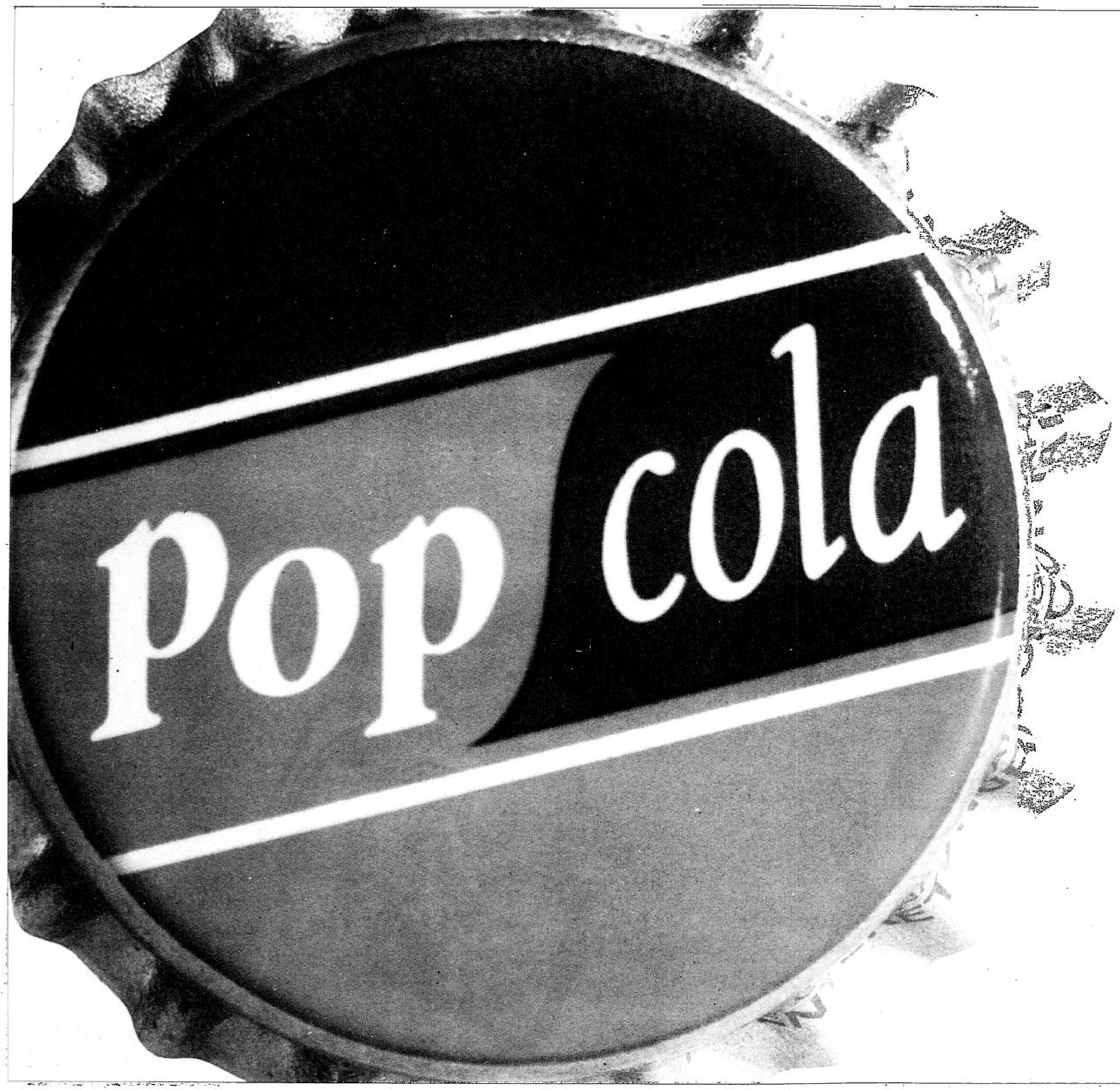

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INFOTECH

LEO MAGNO, Editor

Moore's Law still applies, says Intel

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

MOORE'S Law, a principle first observed in 1965 by Intel co-founder Gordon Moore, will continue at least through the end of this decade, an official from Intel said.

Moore's Law states that the number of transistors (a basic component of an integrated circuit that acts as a switch for electronic signals) per square inch on integrated circuits will double every 18 to 24 months.

This law has been the driving principle behind microchip design, and the barometer of research and development activities in Intel for the last three decades. Currently, a Pentium 4 chip contains 42 million transistors in a fingernail-sized silicon wafer.

By 2007, Intel says that it can fit a billion transistors into a single microchip. That roughly translates to a 20 gigahertz of microprocessing power, according to Melissa McVicker, desktop and mobile platform regional marketing director for Intel Asia Pacific.

Some studies suggest, however, that physical limitations in chip design could be reached by 2017.

Invented by three scientists at Bell Laboratories in 1947, the transistor rapidly replaced the vacuum tube (which you still can find in some old speakers and amplifiers) as an electronic signal

MOORE'S/ p. H4

Voice over Internet revenues to hit $13B

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

REVENUES derived from voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services in Asia Pacific will reach around $13 billion by 2005, according to research firm International Data Corp.

VoIP, or a voice delivered using Internet protocol, describes how voice information in digital form is sent in discrete packets rather than in traditional circuit-switched form, which is currently done in telephone networks. One of the major advantages of VoIP is that it avoids the tolls charged by ordinary telephone services.

Simon Chew, senior analyst for IDC's IP and Broadband Equipment Communications Research Group in Asia Pacific, said that the falling rates in long distance and international calls are driving service providers, including some telephone companies, to invest in VoIP services.

The falling rates in long distance calls have eventually eroded revenues of these telephone companies, while VoIP service revenues had been growing steadily especially in deregulated markets like China, India and Korea, Chew said.

Long distance and international

VOICE/ p. H3

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Oracle completes transition from database company to e-business solutions firm

By Leo Magno

READ MORE ABOUT THIS STORY ONLINE
INQ7.net

Oracle bets big on clusters
http://www.inq7.net/inf/2001/dec/10/inf_1-1.htm

JARVIS

TWO common descriptions of Redwood Shores, California-based Oracle Corp. are (1) the world's largest database company and (2) the second biggest software company in the world. Oracle of Redwood is second only to Microsoft Corp. of Redmond, Washington.

But in the last few years the company has been stressing that it is not only a database company; it is an applications company as well. Oracle, which aside from its database software also provides e-business applications, has been folding its solutions around the Internet just like other software companies around the world. This is an essential survival strategy for IT companies today. But what makes Oracle unique is that the company's core product is very much integrated into its e-business solutions direction.

"We have successfully moved from being a database company to an e-business solutions company," said Mark Jarvis, senior vice president and chief marketing officer of Oracle Corp. "The database part of our business is still the biggest revenue generator, but the applications side is the one enjoying the biggest growth."

The key to the successful transition, said Jarvis, is that the applications component complements the database component of the product.

"Our database and applications are closely coupled, so both segments are driving each other's growth," Jarvis said. "This is the reason why others have failed. Informix wanted to stay as purely a database company, and in the end they didn't have the applications they needed."

Informix Software Inc. used to be the biggest competitor of Oracle, until it folded up and was bought by IBM earlier this year. Informix was even regarded as being technically superior to Oracle, but in the end lost its customer base. The company had scoffed at Oracle's decision to go into the applications business and declared that it was going to be a pure database provider.

"Informix actually called up Oracle and asked if we wanted to buy them, and we said no," Jarvis revealed.

Now that IBM (which also has an Oracle competitor in the form of DB2) has bought Informix, Big Blue now has the two biggest database threats to Oracle under its wings.

"IBM is our biggest competitor today," said Jarvis. "We don't compete with Microsoft. Microsoft is a games company so we don't worry about them."

Microsoft is also in the database business with its SQL Server product. It recently entered the video gaming market when it launched the Xbox.

Last week, Oracle embarked on a new marketing campaign called "Unbreakable." The company is saying that you "can't break it" and you "can't break in," referring to the reliability and the security of Oracle. As chief marketing officer of the company, however, Jarvis admits that there are limitations to this claim.

"We have had 10 times more attempts at security breaches (because of the new campaign), but none have succeeded so far," he said. "But when we call our product unbreakable, there are realistic limitations to it. Remember those Tonka Toys you used to get as a kid? They said those were unbreakable. They are indeed tough, but roll a car over them and they would break."

Jarvis also admitted that the "Unbreakable" campaign unintentionally becomes a lure and a challenge to hackers to try and break into Oracle systems, but he said the company is generally happy about it, with the possible exception

ORACLE/ p. H3

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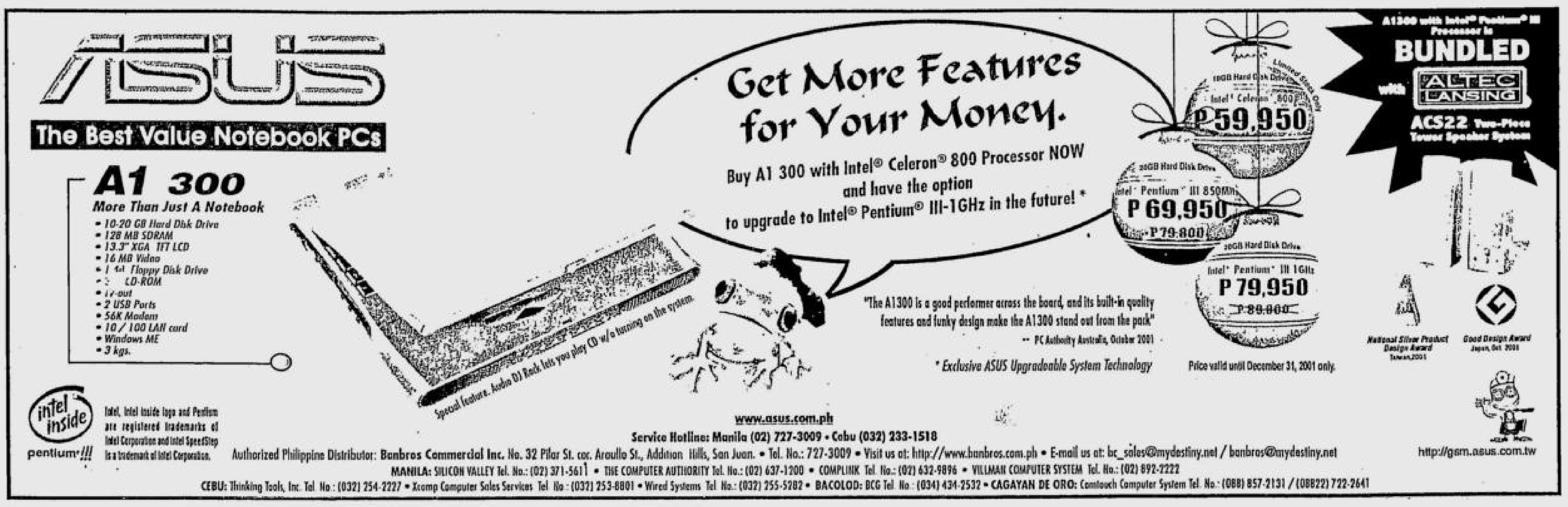

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Intel unveils 'Banias' processor for mobile personal computers

BY ERWIN LEMUEL G. OLIVA

MICROPROCESSOR company Intel is now working on a next-generation microprocessor codenamed Banias that is expected to power future mobile personal computers.

While declining to give more details about the new microprocessor, Melissa McVicker, desktop and mobile platform regional marketing manager for Intel Asia Pacific said that Banias will replace Intel's Pentium III-M (for mobile) processor by 2003.

"The Banias will be developed from the ground up," McVicker said, noting that the new microprocessor for mobile PCs will be powerful, and low-powered (therefore it will give mobile computers longer battery life), and thin (smaller form-factor for mobile devices). It will also be designed specifically for a wireless environment.

McVicker said that the mobile PC industry will remain strong until 2005, an outlook shared by analysts and American market research firms like International Data Corp.

"IDC says that the growth of mobile PC market continues to be good," she added.

Intel's latest roadmap show that it will introduce the mobile Pentium 4 processor 845MP chipset, which will power full-size and thin and light mobile PCs by second half of 2002. The new mobile chips will have clock speeds of 1.5 gigahertz to 2 gigahertz.

Support for the Pentium III Processor-M will remain until 2002, Intel said.

McVicker however said that the chipmaker will start "painting its roadmap orange" adding that Intel intends to eventually stop production of Pentium IIIs, as it ramps up production of Pentium 4s for all market segments, including the mobile PC industry by next year.

"Ramping up (of production) of the Pentium 4 is a gradual process. Eventually, though, we will not make Pentium 3s anymore, just like what we did with the Pentium 2," McVicker added.

The chipmaker is also embarking on two new innovations. One of these is called the "terahertz transistor" architecture, a project which aims to fit a billion transistors into a single chip. Another Intel chip innovation called the "bumpless build-up layer" packaging technology. The bumpless build-up layer is a new packaging technology for microprocessors, McVicker said.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS STORY ONLINE
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Intel unveils Banias chip for mobile PCs
http://www.inq7.net/inf/2001/dec/13/inf_1-1.htm

Intel says Moore's Law will continue till 2010
http://www.inq7.net/inf/2001/dec/14/inf_2-1.htm

Inside Intel: A closer look at the giant chipmaker
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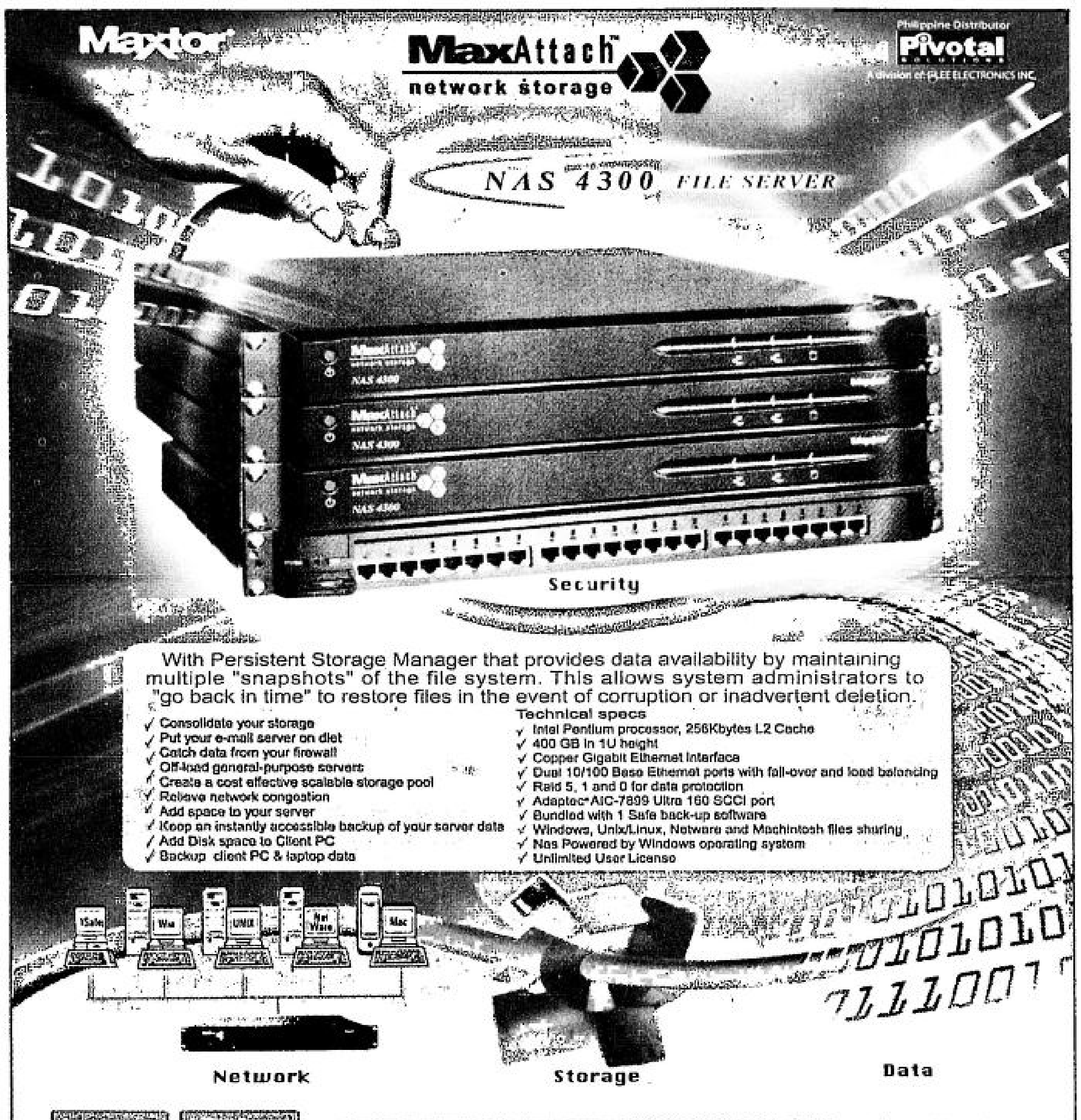

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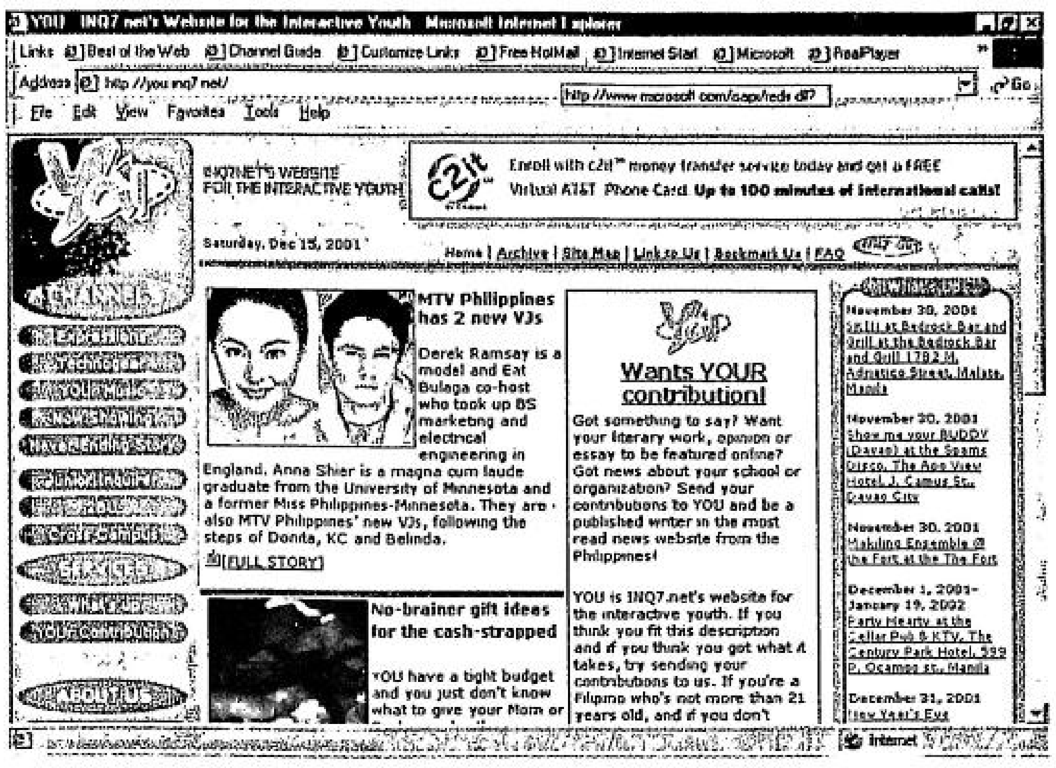

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MTV Philippines has 2 new VJs

Derek Ramsay is a model and Eat Bulaga co-host who took up BS marketing and electrical engineering in England. Anna Shier is a magna cum laude graduate from the University of Minnesota and a former Miss Philippines-Minnesota. They are also MTV Philippines' new VJs, following the steps of Donita, KC and Belinda.

[FULL STORY]

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GIFT ideas and new movies are on this week's issue of YOU at www.you.inq7.net.

New MTV VJs, gift ideas featured at INQ7.net's new website for the youth

ANNA Shier and Derek Ramsay are the new VJs of MTV Philippines, following the footsteps of Donita, Belinda and KC. Arnold Schwarzenegger is due to shoot "Terminator 3" in April next year. Lenny Kravitz was voted the best male performer by VH1. "The Lord of the Rings" will premiere worldwide this week. And finally, "Ocean's 11" just kicked Harry Potter's butt off the top place in Hollywood.

But of course you probably already know all of this if you've just visited YOU, INQ7 Interactive Inc.'s website for today's interactive youth.

INQ7 Interactive Inc. is the online news delivery organization of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA Network Inc. It recently launched a vertical portal for the youth called YOU, which can be accessed at www.you.inq7.net.

YOU is the umbrella site for three other youth destinations, namely Cross-Campus, Junior Inquirer and 2bU!

Cross-Campus is an online original, culling written pieces from students and giving them an online venue to publish their written work. It gives students a chance to have their essays, poetry, news and feature articles be published online in the most visited website from the Philippines. Junior Inquirer is the INQUIRER print's regular Saturday paper for preteens, while 2bU! is the Wednesday subsection of the INQUIRER Lifestyle section.

YOU aims to become a destination for Generation Y, or people below 21 but old enough to surf the Web on their own.

Some of the channels of YOU are Now Showing, which contains news and reviews about the latest movie and TV offerings; Your Music, which features the latest music news, band gigs and other music content; Expressions, which features original material written by students and submitted to YOU; and the Never-Ending Story, a collaborative story-writing effort online where readers and aspiring writers can compose the next portion of a story developed over time through contributions that will be collected later on to form one whole written piece. YOU also has What's Up?, a scheduling service in partnership with Scheds.com where readers can view the latest events and happenings, and the system can remind the user via e-mail or text message of any event included in the listing.

Very soon, YOU will also offer a modified chat service, discussion boards and contributions sent via text messages.

For inquiries, e-mail you@inq7.net.

RP mission visits SAP headquarters

A GROUP of executives from Philippine IT companies looking to develop outsourcing opportunities in Germany recently visited SAP AG headquarters in Walldorf.

The delegation, led by Trade Undersecretary Gregory Domingo, included private sector representatives, other DTI executives and members of the Philippine diplomatic community based in Cologne. The delegation was a part of the Philippine IT Trade and Investment Mission to Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom, according to a press statement.

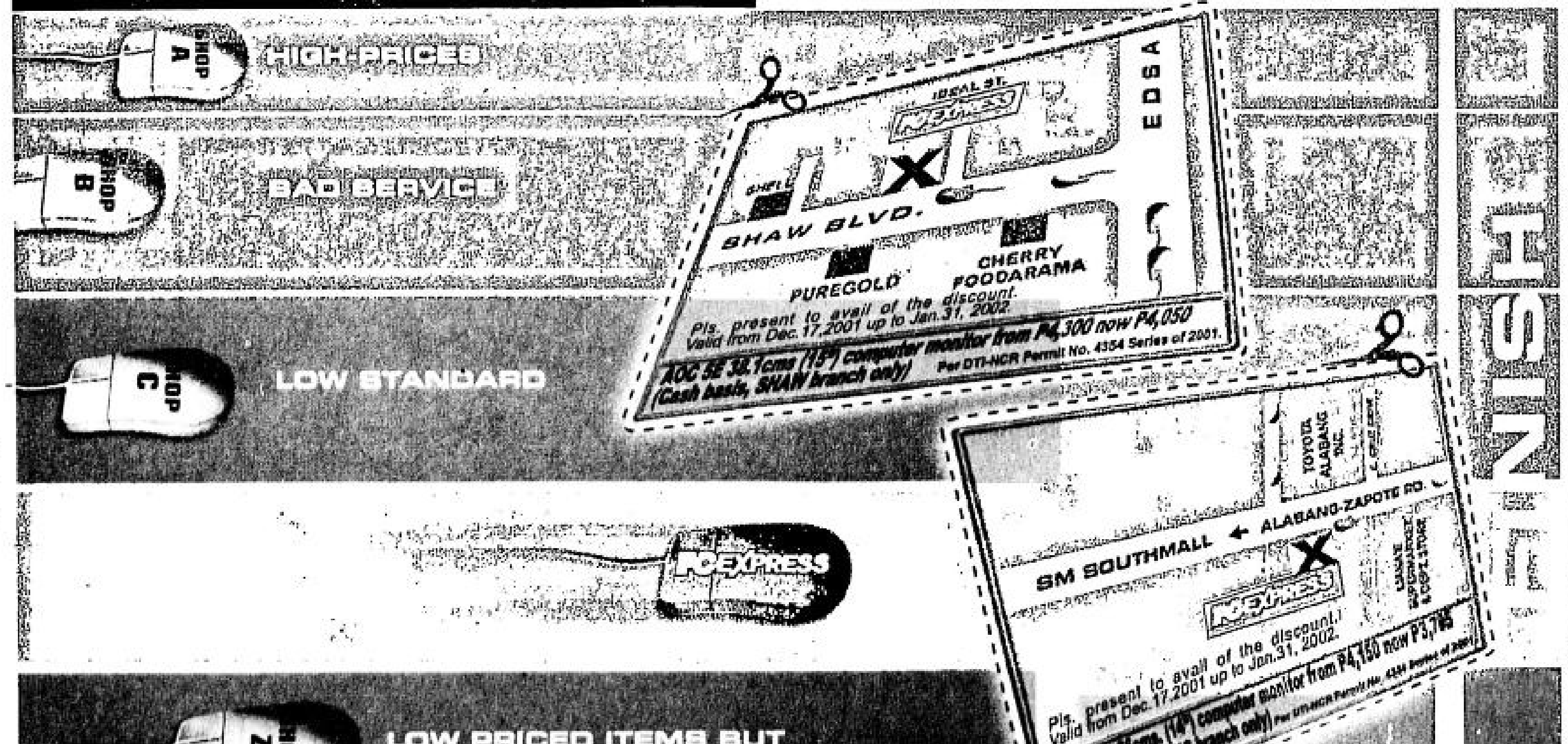
SAP executives briefed representatives of WeServ Systems, Software Ventures, SPI Technologies and Transnational Diversified on ways to build relationships with German businesses interested in outsourcing their IT requirements. According to Marivic Gamo, SAP Philippines marketing and alliance manager, the discussion focused on SAP's large German installed base, and how the mySAP Customer Relationship Management (mySAP CRM) solution can be leveraged to build relationships with those companies.

MySAP CRM manages and synchronizes customer communications through a variety of channels with marketing, sales, and service departments and personnel. It optimizes information sources for better understanding of customer behavior and provides the means for companies to collaborate with suppliers, partners and customers to improve processes and meet customer needs, according to Gamo.

Rainer Zinow, VP for the Customer Interaction Center of the mySAP CRM Group, briefed the delegation of approximately 15 representatives.

Other groups from the Philippines are expected to visit SAP's headquarters next year.

"The Philippine IT Mission to SAP AG is not going to be an isolated event. It is, in fact, a precursor to a bigger event that will take place sometime in September 2002. This event will put SAP Philippines on the radar screens of the SAP AG board and the executive department of the Philippine government," Gamo said.



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7. Payments should be in cash basis only.
8. Discounted items have one (1) year warranty.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4354 Series of 2001.

RP, Malaysia explore ICT collaboration

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

A RECENT Malaysian government-backed mission to the Philippines has produced possible areas of collaboration in information technology between local firms and Malaysian companies in animation, software development and smart card technology.

The Malaysian mission to the Philippines is part of the memorandum of understanding signed on August by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Multimedia Development Corp., the private corporation mandated to develop the Multimedia Super Corridor in Malaysia.

Moggie and Tan Sri Othman Yeop Abdullah, executive chair of the Multimedia Development Corp., led the mission in the Philippines.

Assistant Secretary Toby Melissa Monsod said that the Malaysian high-tech companies are looking at Filipino firms whom they could work with in developing content for their local animation industry and "smart" schools, which would be requiring multi-media content for distance education initiatives.

"The animation industry looks promising," Monsod said.

The mission also intends to "explore" the feasibility of implementing Malaysia's Government Multi-Purpose Card (GMPC) in the Philippines, according to Monsod.

The GMPC is a flagship application developed by the government and the private sector that creates a common platform for smart card solutions. The smart card, which will be given to two million people in Malaysia, is a driver's license, passport, health insurance card and e-cash, all-in-one.

In a conference in the Philippines, Leo Moggie, Malaysian Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia, said that Malaysia intends to make the smart card accessible to all members of Asean.

"We're working toward making it the first Asean e-system," Mogee said. "And we're starting with the Philippines."

Monsod said that the Philippines might be offering the GMPC system as an "optional" service of government, but declined to comment on the details of its plan of rolling out the technology in the country.

With the intent of protecting intellectual property rights in the Philippines and Malaysia, Othman Yeop Abdullah suggested that both countries should set up a jointly run arbitration center that will address disputes arising from violations of IP rights of owners of software and content.

Eight Malaysian firms, through the Department of Trade and Industry, recently held a business matching session to give local firms a chance to work with them in animation, software development, e-learning, communications and smart card solutions.

WHAT IS?

Smart card—looks like your usual credit card in terms of form factor, but actually contains a smart chip instead of the traditional electronic swipe-readable data holder.

Burger King uses technology to gather customer data

EMC Corp. recntly announced that Burger King is standardizing on EMC Symmetrix and CLARiiON networked storage to gather more information about 12 million people who visit Burger King every day.

"The millions of people who eat at Burger King restaurants each day generate a wealth of information that is essential for us to better tailor our products to customer preference,"said Rafael Sanchez, Burger King Corp.'s chief information officer. "The information storage and management platform EMC provides will help to ensure the knowledge fueling our business intelligence initiative is available when and where it is needed. As we prepare for separation from our parent company, Diageo, we require a new storage infrastructure that will drive our expansion while reducing the costs of functioning as an independent entity."

Miami-based Burger King Corp. selected an EMC enterprise storage area network (SAN) based on EMC Symmetrix Enterprise Storage, EMC CLARiiON 4700 and Connectrix fiber-channel switches. Burger King uses a broad range EMC software to further improve up-time and manageability of its Symmetrix and

BURGER/ p.H4

Chinese online dissident gets 4 years in jail

A CHINESE dissident has been sentenced to four years in jail for e-mailing articles criticizing official attitudes toward the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, a local judge said Friday.

Wang Jinbo, 29, was given the jail term at the Linyi Intermediate People's Court in eastern Shandong province Thursday, and was planning to appeal, the judge told AFP by telephone.

"I know he's preparing to appeal, but he hasn't actually done so yet," said the judge, who would only give his surname, Xue.

Wang was brought to court on Nov. 14 but the hearing recessed after one day without announcing a sentence.

Wang was arrested in May and three months later was charged with "inciting the subversion of state power," according to the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Hong Kong.

The charge stemmed from articles by Wang calling for the overturning of the government's official verdict that the 1989 protests were "counter-revolutionary."

Some six weeks of demonstrations by unarmed student protesters and citizens were violently crushed by the Chinese military in June 1989.

The articles, e-mailed to overseas Chinese organizations, also called on the communist government to free political dissidents, the center said. Wang's arrest forms part of a series of detentions and trials over recent years that reflect the government's determination to prevent free expression and free access to information on the Internet. *AFP*

Voice . . .

(From page H1)

calls are currently the bread-and-butter of traditional telephone companies.

IDC forecasts show that China will take a lion's share of VoIP revenues in the region. Other big markets include Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia. The Philippine market, unfortunately, is lumped with other countries, where the prospect of VoIP is not as attractive as in China.

Currently, the National Telecommunications Commission, a government body mandated to oversee activities in the local telecommunications services in the Philippines, has prevented service providers from rolling out VoIP services in the country indefinitely as it gives local telephone companies time to recoup investments poured into their traditional voice services.

Chew said that VoIP services will take time to flourish in countries where there is regulation of such services.

"Carriers always have this dilemma over recouping their investments or deploying new infrastructure to get ahead with competition," Chew added. "VoIP provides new revenue streams."

Oracle . . .

(From page H1)

of the developers who have to worry about making the product actually fool-proof.

Jarvis added that the market is now more concerned about security breaches and high data availability after the World Trade Center bombings and increasing hacker activity.

"There were many Oracle customers at the World Trade Center, but none of them lost their data," Jarvis said. "Disaster recovery and demand for secure environments are driving the market today. These created new demands for our business."

This, he said, is the rationale behind the "Unbreakable" campaign.

"Oracle can be described in many ways, but with the enhanced security features, real application clusters, high security and continuous availability, all we need to say in these times of terrorist attacks is that the system is unbreakable, and the message would go through," Jarvis said.

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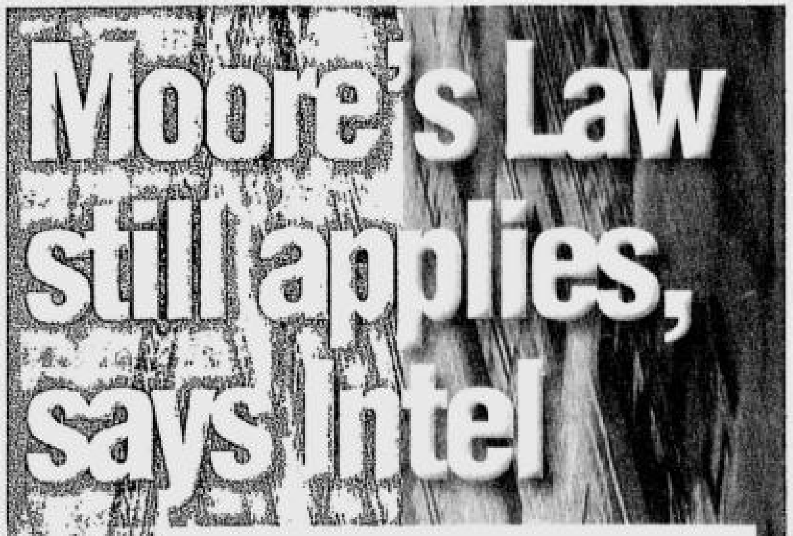

Moore's Law still applies, says Intel

(From page H1)

regulator. It regulates or controls the current or voltage flowing through the chip. It acts as a switch or "gate" for electronic signals within an integrated circuit. It consists of three layers of a semiconductor (a hybrid material combining an insulator and a conductor), each capable of carrying a current (voltage).

Transistors are today's basic elements in integrated circuits, which consist of very large numbers of transistors interconnected with circuitry and baked into a single silicon microchip.

Aiming to address issues that are stifling the progress of Moore's Law, Intel has recently announced two "breakthroughs" in microchip design, which aims to address issues such as heating problems in smaller transistors, and leakage of voltage (current) in microscopic transistors.

One of these innovations is called "terahertz transistor" architecture. Aiming to fit a billion transistors into a single chip, the terahertz transistor architecture is an Intel innovation that intends to replace what the scientists at Bell Labs have invented. Terahertz transistors are smaller (sizes are now measured in nanometers), and uses new materials that hopes to solve heating problems and current leakage in minuscule transistors, according to McVicker.

As more transistors are packed onto a single chip, McVicker said that more power will be required to run it, and more power means the chip will produce more heat. More heat also drains batteries unnecessarily, while also consuming more electricity. That presents a problem for mobile PC users who want to have longer hours of battery life, while enjoying the advantages derived from a computer run by a powerful microprocessor.

McVicker said that the terahertz transistor architecture is Intel's answer to the power and heating problem issues inherent in tomorrow's smaller, higher-performing chips. As the name indicates, the terahertz transistor is a more efficient transistor because it packs 1,000 gigahertz of microprocessing power. This chip will run future applications such as speech recognition, translation, real-time face recognition, and even render better graphics with "real-to-life" qualities.

Intel is scheduled to implement the terahertz transistor architecture around 2005, McVicker said.

Another Intel chip innovation called the "bumpless build-up layer" packaging technology also hopes to breathe new life into Moore's Law. The bumpless build-up layer is a new packaging technology for microprocessors, McVicker said. A package is the material used to deliver the power a chip needs. It is also the same material that transfers information into and out of the chip to the motherboard.

A chip is useless without a package because it draws heat from the silicon transistors. Intel said that the package is "bumpless" because it does not use tiny solder bumps to attach the silicon die to the package wires. Also, it is described as "build-up layer" because the package is "grown" (built up) around the silicon die, rather than being manufactured separately and bonded to it.

This innovation is a key element in Intel's strategy to reach a billion transistors on a chip by 2002, McVicker said. It also offers a number of advantages over today's packaging technologies.

The bumpless build-up layer packaging technology offers a thinner and lighter (thinner than a dime) package that runs on less power. Being smaller and lighter, this packing technology also allows Intel to incorporate tightly interconnected multiple chips (processors) inside a small package, McVicker said.

"We really don't know yet how much this packaging technology will reduce power consumption because we still don't have it in volume. It's still in the labs so it's too soon to tell," McVicker added, noting that the expected rollout of this technology will be between 2006 and 2007.

Intel has invested around $4.2 billion in research and development activities for 2001, McVicker said.

Lepanto saves ₱7M through B2B site

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Co., a leading mining company in the Philippines, concluded an auction for pine logs at SourcePilipinas.com which resulted in a P7 million savings from their last purchase price, or a reduction of over 30 percent.

Pine logs comprise a major consumable product used in their underground mining operations in Mankayan, Benguet.

Lepanto, one of SourcePilipinas' pioneer trading partners, has been transacting through the e-marketplace for over a year. Last month's auction was the first for pine logs. The winning bid bested 41 other bids from numerous foreign suppliers.

"As part of our e-commerce initiative, we are migrating all our purchases onto SourcePilipinas. Clearly, this was the right decision. The numbers speak for themselves," said Bryan Yap, Lepanto chief financial officer. "In addition to the auction facility which continually delivers the best prices for us, we make use of other functionalities such as the Request-for-Quotation (RFQ) and the cataloguing feature to streamline our whole procurement process. The RFQ function is being used for smaller requirements that cannot be accommodated by the auction facility. This ensures that all our purchases are coursed through SourcePilipinas."

SourcePilipinas is a multi-industry B2B horizontal e-marketplace powered by Oracle's latest exchange technologies. Trading partners are allowed access to an extensive catalogue offering both direct and indirect materials.

In addition, various auction facilities are available for both buyers and sellers.

"Our suppliers are numerous and geographically dispersed, and SourcePilipinas has made it much easier for us to bring them together," added Cherry Tan, Lepanto purchasing manager. "Migrating our suppliers online has been quick and effortless, especially with SourcePilipinas' invaluable training and support."

SourcePilipinas is open to any business organization. Members need only access to an Internet browser to benefit from the features and facilities of the e-marketplace.

"SourcePilipinas has given us a more convenient and less costly way to build new supplier relationships, as well as maintain current ones," Tan concludes.

Hiding portions of your Word document

By Jerry Liao

ASIDE from password-protecting your Microsoft Word document, you can also protect it from prying eyes by hiding important portions of your document. Heres how:

(1) Open your MS Word document.
(2) Highlight the part of your document you want to hide.
(3) Go to "Format."
(4) Got to "Font."
(5) Under "Effects," select "Hidden."
(6) Save your document.

POWERTIPS

To reveal the hidden portion or portions of your document once you are ready to view it, do the following steps:

(1) Open your MS Word document.
(2) Go to "Tools."
(3) Go to "Options."
(4) Under the "View" tab, select. "Hidden text" under the "Non-Printing Characters" section.
(5) To hide it again, simply remove the check mark on "Hidden text."

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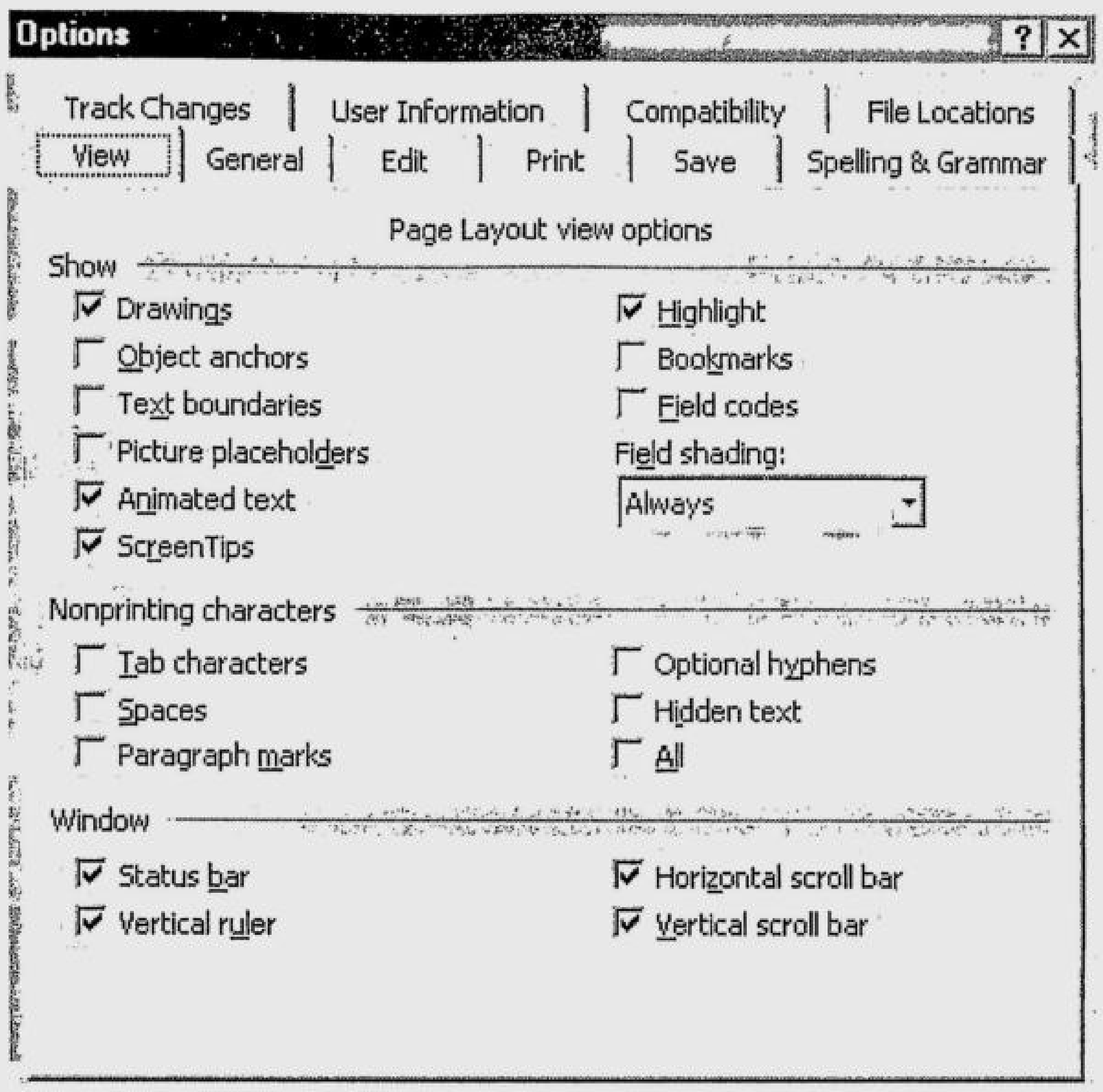

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☑ Horizontal scroll bar
☑ Vertical scroll bar

Internet business solutions expected to account for 40% of US productivity hike over 10 years

INTERNET business solutions are proving to be a significant contributor to the acceleration of US productivity, according to preliminary results of a Momentum Research Group study. According to the study, Internet business solutions will drive 40 percent of the projected acceleration in the US productivity growth rate from 2001-2011.

- Respondents are finding that their adoption of Internet business solutions is financially beneficial.
- Many organizations participating in the study reported revenue increases resulting from the adoption of Internet business solutions.
- Of these organizations, the average revenue increase was 10.3 percent, and most companies reported that the major revenue impact came from an increased ability to attract new customers and grow existing customer relationships.
- The adoption of Internet business solutions has yielded a cumulative cost savings of $155 billion to US companies and is expected to produce an additional $373 billion in cost savings, most of which will be realized by 2005.

"There are several studies that have tackled the productivity paradox at the macro, industry and firm level," said Hal Varian, dean of the School of Information and Management Systems at the University of California, Berkeley. "However, this is the first study, to our knowledge, that looks inside the firm to gauge the impact of different Internet-enabled business processes on revenue enhancement and cost savings."

The US government estimates that the US productivity growth rate was 2.5 percent from 1995 to 2000, presenting an acceleration of 1.3 percentage points over the productivity growth rate experienced between 1974 and 1995 (1.2 percent). Furthermore, the government estimates that the US productivity growth rate will continue to grow during the next 10 years at a rate of 2.1 percent. This 2.1 percent represents an acceleration of .9 percentage points over the productivity growth rate from 1974-1995. The study findings indicate that the cumulative cost savings of $528 billion ($155 billion plus $373 billion) resulting from the implementation of Internet business solutions will account for .36 percentage points of the productivity growth rate or 40 percent of the forecasted .9-point increase. Furthermore, if these cost savings are sustained for 10 years, the impact of Internet business solutions on the productivity growth rate could generate $213 billion in increased wages.

"The Internet is the 21st-century-equivalent of Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' with respect to its influence on the US economy and the way the world does business overall. Among other things, the Internet is helping to reduce costs and increase productivity throughout the economy. These gains in productivity ultimately benefit workers by permanently raising their wages," said Robert Litan, vice president and director of Economic Studies at The Brookings Institution.

Additional findings of the study included:

- If all US-based public and private organizations fully implement Internet business solutions, up to $1.4 trillion in cost savings could be realized.
- Those cost savings translate into $3,500 in increased wages per worker.
- All estimates for increased wages are based on permanent per capita increases that would be realized after 10 years.

The study was sponsored by Cisco Systems Inc. in the hopes of measuring the financial impact of Internet business solutions on US businesses. The study is called "Net Impact." Net Impact is measured in terms of revenue creation and cost savings. The study is the product of researchers from Momentum Research Group, The Brookings Institution and University of California, Berkeley.

The study surveyed more than 2,000 senior decision-makers charged with implementing Internet business solutions for their companies and then created a projection of the financial impact for the entire US economy from the results. Preliminary results indicate that businesses believe that their investments in Internet solutions are paying off in the form of cost savings and increased revenues.

Burger King uses technology to gather . . .

(From page H3)

CLARiiON-based SANs. Burger King's EMC software solutions include ControlCenter, ESN Manager, TimeFinder, Access Logix, Navisphere and SnapView.

According to Sanchez, EMC software-driven information availability improvements are driving down costs and further improving our data collection and maintenance windows.

"These savings will become more critical as we create a global repository of data about sales transactions, speed of service and quality for every Burger King restaurant," said Sanchez.

EMC Global Services is working with Burger King Corp. to implement and maintain its information storage infrastructure. "Our team of EMC customer support specialists, engineers, project managers and sales representatives work with us to brainstorm, design and implement strategic storage solutions," said Sanchez.

Frank Hauck, EMC's executive vice president of customer operations, said, "Burger King is breaking new ground in managing information for ultimate value. Only EMC provides the automation, openness and integration Burger King and other companies must have to successfully consolidate their storage applications under a single open management architecture. Once EMC infrastructures are in place, the business worth of information takes off and provides companies with significant competitive advantage.

Burger King created the American icon, the Home of the Whopper, in 1957. The company and its franchisees operate more than 11,370 restaurants in all 50 states and 58 countries and international territories around the world, with more than 92 percent of Burger King restaurants owned and operated by independent franchisees.

In fiscal year 2001, the Burger King system had system-wide sales of $11.2 billion. Burger King is a part of Diageo, the international food and drinks company.

EMC Corp. is a leader in information storage systems, software, networks and services, providing the information infrastructure for a connected world.

Carnegie Mellon tie-up with STI aims to produce software experts

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

CONSIDERING that the software industry remains the biggest money-making industry in the field of information technology, local school Systems Technology Institute (STI) is now positioning itself as a school that will be able to produce top-notch Filipino software experts.

With an initial capitalization of P30 million to P40 million, STI announced recently that it will open a special school next year designed to create a pool of software developers.

Dubbed as the "iAcademy," the school will integrate courses developed by Carnegie Technology Education, a wholly owned subsidiary of Carnegie Mellon University, to its own undergraduate degree programs, according to Mitch Andaya, dean and chief operating officer of the iAcademy.

STI will integrate 10 CTE courses into its own degree programs. Courses, which will take about 150 hours, will combine both classroom-based and Internet-based instruction.

"Software is still the biggest industry. Besides, software development remains the strength of Filipinos," Philip Miller, executive vice president of CTE said, noting that Filipinos remain as the "lowest" paid software developers compared with the Indians and Americans.

"This indicates that companies such as IBM can bid software development jobs at cheaper prices to Filipinos as opposed to Indians or Americans," Miller said.

Miller said that courses offered at the iAcademy would cost 10 percent less of what a person would spend if he takes the same in the United States.

Andaya, for his part, said that iAcademy tuition fees would cost around P40,000 to P50,000 a semester, a cost that would be suitable for well-off high-school graduates.

The iAcademy targets 200 to 250 enrolees at the beginning of the first semester in June 2002.

Aside from STI, CTE has also established partnership with iAsia Academy, another local school that considers itself as an "Internet career development center."

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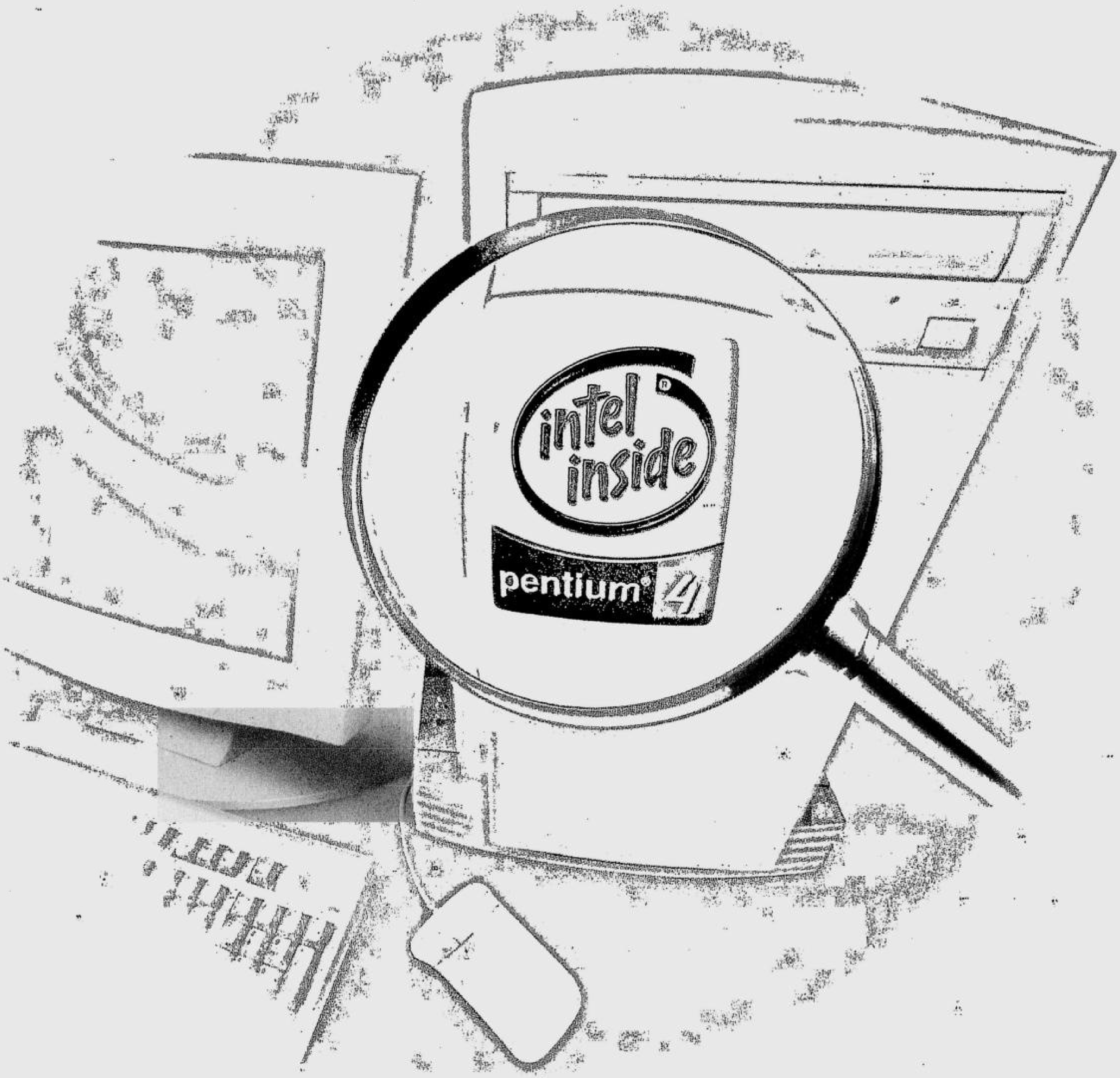

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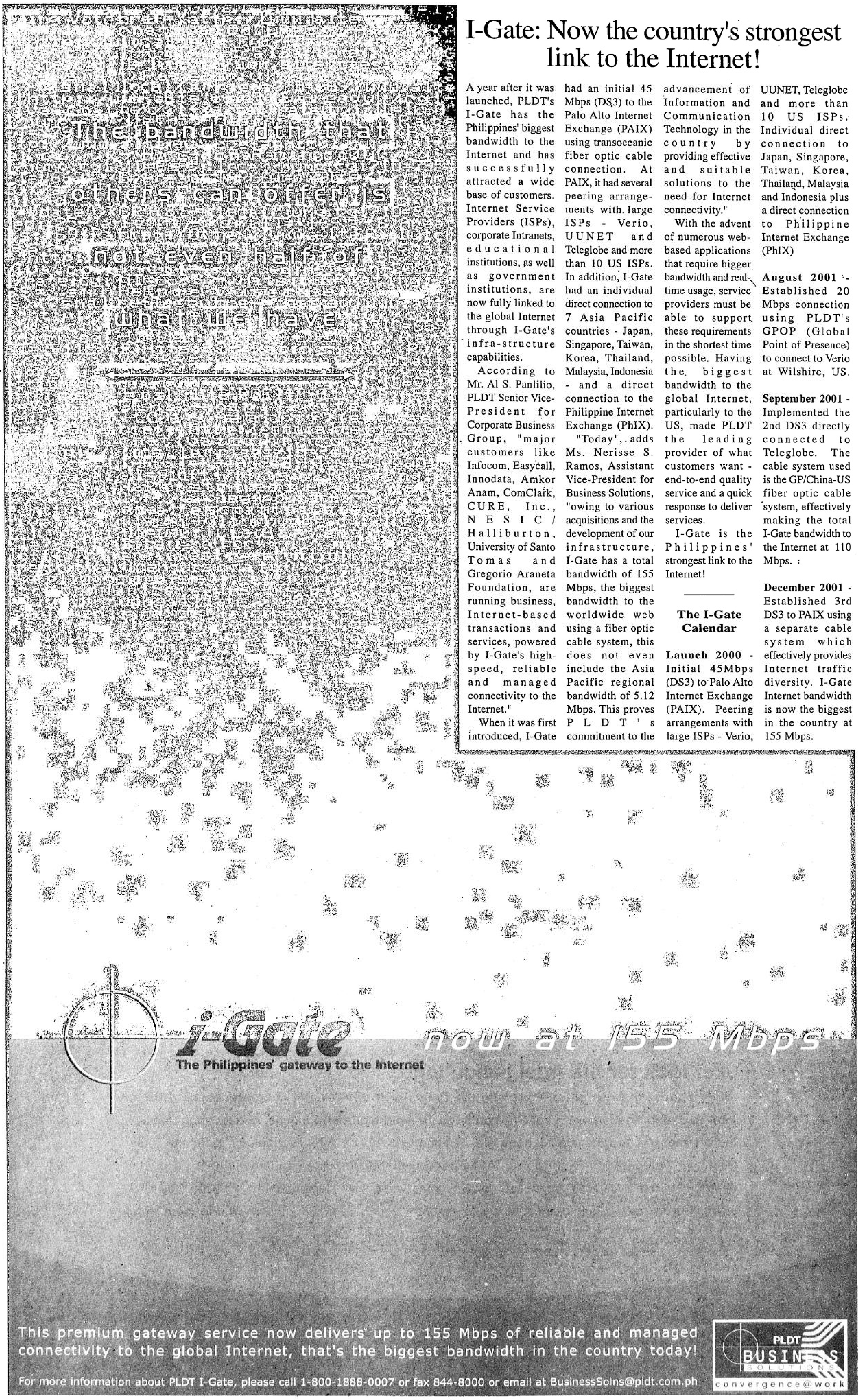

The bandwidth that others can offer is not even half of what we have

I-Gate: Now the country's strongest link to the Internet!

A year after it was launched, PLDT's I-Gate has the Philippines' biggest bandwidth to the Internet and has successfully attracted a wide base of customers. Internet Service Providers (ISPs), corporate Intranets, educational institutions, as well as government institutions, are now fully linked to the global Internet through I-Gate's infra-structure capabilities.

According to Mr. Al S. Panlilio, PLDT Senior Vice-President for Corporate Business Group, "major customers like Infocom, Easycall, Innodata, Amkor Anam, ComClark, CURE, Inc., NESIC / Halliburton, University of Santo Tomas and Gregorio Araneta Foundation, are running business, Internet-based transactions and services, powered by I-Gate's high-speed, reliable and managed connectivity to the Internet."

When it was first introduced, I-Gate had an initial 45 Mbps (DS3) to the Palo Alto Internet Exchange (PAIX) using transoceanic fiber optic cable connection. At PAIX, it had several peering arrangements with. large ISPs - Verio, UUNET and Teleglobe and more than 10 US ISPs. In addition, I-Gate had an individual direct connection to 7 Asia Pacific countries - Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia - and a direct connection to the Philippine Internet Exchange (PhIX).

"Today", adds Ms. Nerisse S. Ramos, Assistant Vice-President for Business Solutions, "owing to various acquisitions and the development of our infrastructure, I-Gate has a total bandwidth of 155 Mbps, the biggest bandwidth to the worldwide web using a fiber optic cable system, this does not even include the Asia Pacific regional bandwidth of 5.12 Mbps. This proves PLDT's commitment to the advancement of Information and Communication Technology in the country by providing effective and suitable solutions to the need for Internet connectivity."

With the advent of numerous web-based applications that require bigger bandwidth and real-time usage, service providers must be able to support these requirements in the shortest time possible. Having the biggest bandwidth to the global Internet, particularly to the US, made PLDT the leading provider of what customers want - end-to-end quality service and a quick response to deliver services.

I-Gate is the Philippines' strongest link to the Internet!

The I-Gate Calendar

Launch 2000 - Initial 45Mbps (DS3) to Palo Alto Internet Exchange (PAIX). Peering arrangements with large ISPs - Verio, UUNET, Teleglobe and more than 10 US ISPs. Individual direct connection to Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia plus a direct connection to Philippine Internet Exchange (PhIX)

August 2001 - Established 20 Mbps connection using PLDT's GPOP (Global Point of Presence) to connect to Verio at Wilshire, US.

September 2001 - Implemented the 2nd DS3 directly connected to Teleglobe. The cable system used is the GP/China-US fiber optic cable system, effectively making the total I-Gate bandwidth to the Internet at 110 Mbps.

December 2001 - Established 3rd DS3 to PAIX using a separate cable system which effectively provides Internet traffic diversity. I-Gate Internet bandwidth is now the biggest in the country at 155 Mbps.

i-Gate

The Philippines' gateway to the Internet

now at 155 Mbps

This premium gateway service now delivers up to 155 Mbps of reliable and managed connectivity to the global Internet, that's the biggest bandwidth in the country today!

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